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CRITICAL REALIST PERSONALISM: INTRODUCING A SPECIAL ISSUE ON THE WORK OF CHRISTIAN SMITH

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IN ADDITION TO his important work on American religion, particularly among adolescents and emerging adults, Christian Smith, the William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of Sociology at the University of Notre Dame, has written several noteworthy texts on the philosophy of social science.¹

In a somewhat inchoate fashion in *Moral, Believing Animals: Human Personhood and Culture*, but explicitly in *What Is a Person? Rethinking Humanity, Social Life, and the Moral Good from the Person Up*, and the recent *To Flourish or Destruct: A Personalist Theory of Human Goods, Motivations, Failure, and Evil*, Smith defends “critical realist personalism” as the best methodological and substantive account of the human being.² In *What Is a Person?*, he draws upon (1) critical realism, especially as articulated by Roy Bhaskar, (2) personalism, referencing the Boston school but indebted particularly to the Continental variety of Mounier and Maritain, among others, and (3) the antinaturalistic phenomenological epistemology of Charles Taylor, to make his case that “we

¹For his work on American religion, see, for instance, Smith, and others, *Young Catholic America: Emerging Adults In, Out of, and Gone from the Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Smith, and others, *Lost in Transition: The Dark Side of Emerging Adulthood* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); with Patricia Snell, *Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Young Adults* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); with Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

²Christian Smith, *Moral, Believing Animals: Human Personhood and Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); *What Is a Person?: Rethinking Humanity, Social Life, and the Moral Good from the Person Up* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); *To Flourish or Destruct: A Personalist Theory of Human Goods, Motivations, Failure, and Evil* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

should toss into the dustbin" the positivistic empiricism governing so much of social science.³ Further, Smith suggests that science properly understood allows for genuine realism, as opposed to mere predictive force, and we can know human nature and its various capacities as the conditions for an ontologically real human personhood, an Aristotelian account of the human good, and a normative defense of human dignity, unlike the competing alternatives of social constructionism, network structuralism, or variables analysis, all dominant theories in contemporary sociology.

For a student of Lonergan, at least six aspects of *What Is a Person?*, now generally regarded as a major contribution to its field, stand out as particularly interesting. First, critical realism. Like Lonergan, Smith rejects the usual reductionistic accounts of knowing as simply inadequate, and considers critical realism the way forward:

Critical Realism (CR) is, in my view, the most promising general approach to social science for best framing our research and theory. CR, as a philosophy of (social) science (not a sociological theory per se), offers the best alternative to the problems and limits presented by positivist empiricism, hermeneutical interpretivism, strong social constructionism, and postmodernist deconstruction. It is the meta-theoretical direction in which American sociology needs to move.⁴

Second, Smith's argument is genuinely *methodical*, in Lonergan's understanding of that term, and he reverses counterpositions while developing positions. For instance, *What Is a Person?* has little patience for positivism and its obvious failure to grasp that the real does not boil down to what one can take a good look at, just as knowing is not taking a good look. Smith rejects the "epistemic fallacy" (Lonergan's "cognitional myth") of identifying the real with the empirical: "objective reality is by nature not *flat* but *stratified*, existing on multiple, though connected, levels. . . . We live in a multilayered reality . . . and our framework for understanding reality must be attuned to that fact. . . ."⁵ Keeping with this, Smith argues for the intelligibility of causality and the real contributions

³Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 11.

⁴"How to Learn Critical Realism," Christian Smith's webpage, accessed September 3, 2015, <https://www3.nd.edu/~csmith22/criticalrealism.htm>.

⁵Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 95.

of intelligent understanding over and above observation, to give but two important examples. Further, he turns to the knowing, acting subject – as interpreted by Charles Taylor – to argue that theoretical accounts alien to our phenomenological experience are insufficient before proceeding, dialectically, to utilize retorsion against those theories inadequate to the way human subjects experience and understand themselves. At least at first glance, this is methodical.

Third, just as Lonergan develops a dynamic worldview of emergence, so too Smith. Explaining the emergence of personhood is a significant theme of the book, especially in its opposition to unsophisticated reductionism. Smith views emergence as the “process of constituting a new entity with its own particular characteristics through the interactive combination of other, different entities that are necessary to create the new entity but that do not contain the characteristics present in the new entity.”⁶ Identifying thirty causal capacities, Smith argues that a person emerges as “a conscious, reflexive, embodied, self-transcending center of subjective experience, durable identity, moral commitment, and social communication who – as the efficient cause of his or her own responsible actions and interaction – exercises complex capacities for agency and intersubjectivity in order to develop and sustain his or her own incommunicable self in loving relationships with other personal selves and with the nonpersonal world.”⁷ Not only are persons real, possessing agency and dignity, but Smith utilizes categories of self-transcendence and love in his definition and explication thereof.

Further, and fourth, in defending the reality of persons, Smith is cautious to avoid a static or naïve essentialism even as he maintains the person as a real identity-unity-whole (not his term) which does not dissolve into its conditions or social environment. Like Lonergan, Smith thinks human nature exists, “that human beings have a specifiable nature, that there is a real quiddity or ‘whatness’ about human personhood that can be known,” and that antiessentialist objections reveal “some important element of truth.”⁸ The way forward, of course, cannot be provided by any sort of counterpositional epistemology or ontology; required is a coherent and critical realism thoroughly adequate to the way human understanding

⁶Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 25-26.

⁷Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 61.

⁸Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 9-10.

really operates.

Fifth, Smith rightfully pivots attention to self-transcendence and love. Not only do lower order capacities “transcend” through emergence, but our various emergent capacities, while they “occur ‘within’ the subjective self . . . enmesh humans with many dimensions of reality – the internal and external, the self and other, the alive and inert, the tangible and intangible, the social and material.”⁹ Ours is an engaged subjectivity, one oriented to go beyond itself to the world and to others, ultimately through the self-transcendence of “love for and communion with other persons.”¹⁰ So constituted, humans are beings for whom the good of others is one’s own personal good, a moral self-transcendence.¹¹

Sixth, and finally, Smith positions his study of the person in a larger context of flourishing and failure, good and evil, the dialectic of what Lonergan terms progress and decline. Persons are incommunicable centers of purpose who exist not only for their own sake but seek to transcend themselves in encounters with others, viewing others’ good as intrinsically their own, and yet “All is not well. Things often don’t work out the way they should. For one reason or way or another, something like brokenness seems to be part of the past and current human condition.”¹² Brokenness occurs at the personal, interpersonal, and social levels, and evil is a persistent and ongoing challenge to well-being; grappling with brokenness is not incidental to the project, but at its core.

Taken together, these six aspects of *What Is a Person?* indicate a project deeply methodical and positional. In fact, the relationship of critical realism, personalism, and concern to explain self-transcending love in the face of evil is reminiscent of that famous slogan from *Insight*:

*Thoroughly understand what it is to understand, and not only will you understand the broad lines of all there is to be understood but also you will possess a fixed base, an invariant pattern, opening upon all further developments of understanding.*¹³

⁹Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 55.

¹⁰Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 65.

¹¹Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 406-12.

¹²Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 76-77.

¹³Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, vol. 3 of the Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 22.

Nor is this mere curiosity, for once intelligence is understood, the struggle to overcome the “flight from understanding,” with all the resulting decline and evil presents itself as a major task, for Smith as much as Lonergan.¹⁴

Despite these compelling strengths, several issues remain. First, and admittedly a concern not entirely impartial: Where is Lonergan in all this? In a reading list Smith provides for critical realism, Lonergan is absent, receives not a single mention in *To Flourish or Destruct*, and is given only one passing reference in a footnote of *What Is a Person?*¹⁵ Of course an intellectual endeavor’s worth is not determined by its explicit use of Lonergan, and Roy Bhaskar is a significant thinker from which to begin, but for those of us who consider Lonergan *the* critical realist a question persists – what about Lonergan?

This might remain a chauvinism if it were not for an objection raised by multiple reviewers that *What Is a Person?* is insufficiently critical, arguing “from, but not much for, critical realism, philosophical personalism, and an anti-foundationist phenomenonological epistemology.”¹⁶ Or, as another commentator objects, “Rather than shedding clarifying light where we have confusion, ‘reality-talk’ here enters in the form of a number of *ex cathedra* statements about the way the world and science are, ‘in fact.’”¹⁷ Of course Smith has his responses, yet his critical grounding is sometimes implicit, inchoate, or unthematized, reminiscent of Lonergan’s claim that while Aristotle and Aquinas “used introspection and did so brilliantly, it remains that they did not thematize their use, did not elevate it into a reflectively elaborated technique, did not work out a proper method for psychology. . . .”¹⁸ So, too, Smith utilizes critical realism brilliantly and productively, but a fully thematized critical realism may very well benefit from the painstaking analysis provided by Lonergan, and on the very issue that some consider Smith’s argument most susceptible to criticism.

In this special issue of *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies*, we debut

¹⁴Insight, 9.

¹⁵After providing a list of important texts, Smith notes that Lonergan, among others, is identified as a critical realist; see *What Is a Person?*, 92n.2.

¹⁶Raymond Martin, *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*, accessed July 31, 2015, <https://ndpr.nd.edu/news/24613-what-is-a-person-rethinking-humanity-social-life-and-the-moral-good-from-the-person-up/>.

¹⁷John Levy Martin, “Personal Best,” *Contemporary Sociology* 42, no. 1 (2013): 6-11, at 9.

¹⁸Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, vol. 2 of the *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

Smith's work to those unfamiliar with it while also offering Lonergan's thought as an overlooked resource for developing a thoroughly *critical* "critical realist personalism." Both, we hope, will profit from the encounter.

Five essays engage *What Is a Person?* In the first two, Christopher Friel and Elizabeth A. Murray examine Roy Bhaskar's critical realism, with Friel noting a deep affinity while also suggesting that Lonergan may help develop a social ontology. Murray is more hesitant, however, concerned that Bhaskar's realism is a kind of dogmatism insisting that we start with the real without cognitional theory or intentionality analysis. That tension, the relationship between metaphysics and epistemology, is then taken up by Thomas J. McPartland who commends Lonergan's methodological precision as justifying Smith's metaphysical claims.

Leaving behind the epistemological questions, the final two essays, by Michael H. McCarthy and Gilles M. Mongeau, SJ, address Smith's explorations of the human good and human dignity. McCarthy traces gaps between the moral *imperatives* and *ontologies* often found in contemporary moral thought, noting similarity in the way Smith and Lonergan use performative contradictions to reverse these inconsistencies. Addressing the topic of human dignity, Mongeau judges Smith positional, but presses him to more sharply articulate distinctions between intentionality analysis, epistemology, and metaphysics, suggesting that the argument could be strengthened on emergence and the scale of values.

Following these five essays on *What Is a Person?*, Prof. Smith responds to his interlocutors and Patrick H. Byrne reviews *To Flourish or Destruct*, Smith's most recent book which was still in press when the other essays were commissioned. Byrne's largely appreciative review essay provides a helpful introduction while also offering challenging questions on Smith's articulation of motivations as causes, the critical grounding of knowing and the human good, and the role of religious transcendence in rendering the social sciences more fully intelligible.

To each of the contributors I offer my thanks, sincerely hoping the exchange redounds to the benefit of all.

THE SOCIAL ONTOLOGY OF CHRISTIAN SMITH AND BERNARD LONERGAN: CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE

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CHRISTIAN SMITH HAS given us a magisterial presentation of the ontology of human persons from a sociological perspective that is full of wisdom, and admirers of Bernard Lonergan, I think, will be full of gratitude for his labors. His thick definition of the human person as “a conscious, reflexive, embodied, self-transcending center of subjective experience, durable identity, moral commitment, and social communication who – as the efficient cause of his or her own responsible actions and interactions – exercises complex capacities for agency and intersubjectivity in order to develop and sustain his or her own incommunicable self in loving relationships with other personal selves and with the nonpersonal world”¹ is sound and, I think, fruitful. Perhaps some readers may feel that Lonergan’s cognitional theory has insights that can shed further light on this definition, but it is not my intention to make such a contribution.

From my perspective, the interesting feature of *What Is a Person?* is the way Smith draws on the critical realist tradition, in particular the thought that stems from British social theory associated with Roy Bhaskar, Margaret Archer, Andrew Collier, and others. He feels that such thought deserves to be better known in the American academy.² I would agree, and add that the Lonergan community, too, may find much of interest. Even so, I would like to invoke the British saying about “coals to Newcastle.” Wasn’t Lonergan a critical realist too? What about Lonergan’s social theory? Does this have

¹Christian Smith, *What Is a Person?: Rethinking Humanity, Social Life, and the Moral Good from the Person Up* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2010), 61.

²Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 20.

anything to offer Smith's inquiry? Without in any way seeking to detract from Smith's achievement, I want to suggest that it has. After all, in both *Insight* and *Method in Theology*, Lonergan discusses "ontology" on just one occasion, and in both instances the context concerns *social* ontology.³ I would like to explore this theme. In particular I wish to attend to the central question that Smith raises regarding the explanation of the sources and origins of social structures.⁴

I will proceed in two steps, a withdrawal and return, so to speak. In the first part, I too will draw on contemporary British social theory, taking as my guide, Patrick Baert, the head of sociology from Cambridge University. My purpose is to sketch out the major emphases taken by various social theories in order to provide a list of the key issues that are addressed. This may help us situate critical realism, and incidentally grasp some perceived weaknesses from the post-structuralist quarter. Then I will run through Bhaskar's contribution to the philosophy of the natural and human sciences. Having done this I will then give an exposition of Lonergan's social ontology arguing that, in the light of the issues I have just raised, it still possesses remarkable contemporary relevance. Finally, I will return to look at how Smith tackles what he sees as the central issue of social theory. I will heartily endorse Smith's project of critically realist personalism, but offer the suggestion that if critical realism is to respond to the challenges posed by Baert, Lonergan's social ontology will prove a valuable resource.

BAERT'S SOCIAL THEORY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Let me begin, then, by briefly reviewing a contemporary introduction to social theory in the twentieth century. My source is Patrick Baert's 1998 book that has received high praise for its comprehensive coverage, its clarity of exposition, and its seriousness of engagement.⁵ As we shall see, Baert is unsympathetic to this critical realism, and faults it for misconceiving the

³Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 628; Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1972), 356.

⁴Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 5.

⁵Patrick Baert, *Social Theory in the Twentieth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1998). The blurb is from William Outhwaite. A more recent edition in 2010 includes the work of Manuel Castells and Clifford Geertz (critical realism appears to have less prominence). Patrick Baert and Filipe Carreira da Silva, *Social Theory in the Twentieth Century and Beyond* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010).

nature of reflection. His work may, however, provide a useful checklist of the main issues that social theory addresses.

Eight approaches are treated in *Social Theory in the Twentieth Century*. A first chapter discusses structuralism (Claude Lévi-Strauss) and genetic structuralism (Pierre Bourdieu). Second, in "The Biological Metaphor: Functionalism and Neo-Functionalism," Baert discusses early contributors such as Bronislaw Malinowski and Alfred Radcliffe-Brown (who like the structuralists also drew on Émile Durkheim), and then Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton, and later functionalists such as Niklas Luhmann. A third chapter treats Symbolic Interactionism influenced by George Mead, and other interpretative theories. The fourth is titled, "The Skilful Accomplishment of Social Order: Giddens's Structuration Theory," and this is followed by "The History of the Present: Foucault's Archeology and Genealogy." Sixth, "The Spread of Reason: Habermas's Critical Theory," then a seventh chapter on rational choice theory, "The Invasion of Economic Man." The final chapter deals with theories influenced by positivism (and falsification) and finally, there is a discussion of Roy Bhaskar's Transformational Model of Social Action in "Eroding Foundations: Positivism, Falsificationism, and Realism." Baert's conclusion offers some critical challenges for social theory.

This, I think, gives a useful map of the terrain which I shall continue to scan. Social theory, Baert tells us in his introduction, is "a relatively systematic, abstract, and general reflection on the social world"⁶ that was central to the emergence of sociology in the nineteenth century. Today, however, sociology has become professionalized, and includes empirical research (which is distinct from theory), and no longer tends to be tied to political action. Still, it is influenced by precursors such as Durkheim – both structuralism and functionalism adopt a holistic picture of society. According to this doctrine (which underpins the theories discussed in the first two chapters), society, an entity *sui generis*, is to be studied as a whole, and must not simply be seen as a mere aggregation of people pursuing their individual interests.⁷ Structuralism and functionalism, then, are interested in the ways that the parts of the system are related and contribute to that system. Often drawing on linguistic metaphors, structuralists search for the underlying social structures that determine people's actions and thoughts; conversely, the metaphor of society as an organism is invoked by functionalists who believe

⁶Baert, *Social Theory*, 1.

⁷Baert, *Social Theory*, 2.

in the existence of functional prerequisites: in order for any social system to survive it must maintain certain functions (social solidarity, for example). These underlying structures and functions constrain the individual unconsciously in many ways. In contrast, interpretative sociology stresses that people have selves, and can reflect on their (imaginary or real) actions. These theories, influenced by phenomenology and the later Wittgenstein, seek to explain how people actively (though perhaps unintentionally) reconstitute social order – the social construction of reality.⁸ Erving Goffman and Harold Garfinkel demonstrate that order is a practical accomplishment by individuals who possess much tacit knowledge that they may not be able to put into words.⁹

There is, then, a tension in sociological theories between “structure and agency” which subsequent theorists try to integrate. An early attempt was made by Bourdieu’s genetic structuralism, and later by Anthony Giddens’s “structuration theory.”¹⁰ Both argue that people’s daily routines are rooted in a taken-for-granted world. In general, people know how to act in accordance with the implicit, shared rules which make up that world. Unintentionally, agents tend to reproduce these rules even as a language is reproduced in virtue of speakers using it.¹¹ Reconciling structure and agency is a major concern of the critical realists such as Roy Bhaskar and Margaret Archer, as Baert notes, but generally speaking, Baert tends to read the critical realist contribution as anticipated by earlier theorists (such as Bourdieu and Giddens) and offering little that is original.¹²

Another tension concerns social criticism. Both Bourdieu and Giddens acknowledge that sociology and social theory have critical potential. Social theory especially can help us to reflect critically upon society, a task that Baert discusses in the “highly sophisticated” and “elaborate” work of Jürgen Habermas, which also seeks to integrate a wide variety of traditions.¹³ In contrast, the rational choice theorists believe that social and political factors can be explained by an economic logic applied to a “rational, self-

⁸Baert, however, never references Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann.

⁹Baert, *Social Theory*, 3.

¹⁰Baert, *Social Theory*, 4.

¹¹Baert, *Social Theory*, 4.

¹²Baert, *Social Theory*, 196.

¹³Baert, *Social Theory*, 4.

interested agent.”¹⁴ They account for social life by “referring to the fact that people act intentionally, and produce numerous effects some of which are intended, some unintended.”¹⁵ These theorists have been actively engaged in demonstrating the value of the economic approach in many areas such as marriage patterns, rates of fertility, and criminal behavior.

In his fifth chapter on Michel Foucault, Baert (who has much sympathy with the post-structuralist) focuses on historical methodology. Arguing for continuity between the earlier archaeological period and the later genealogical period, Baert attends to the distinctive conception of knowledge acquisition he discerns. In contrast to the mainstream consensus, and in particular, the realist who: (1) tries to explain a world “out there,” (2) does not focus on the self-referentiality of knowledge, and (3) uses the familiar to explain the unfamiliar, Foucault presents a form of knowledge that is first and foremost self-referential.¹⁶ Thus we turn to the past, not so much to understand it, but to encounter the unfamiliar (ultimately in order to illuminate the familiar). In such an encounter we learn the degree to which the meanings and values that inform yesterday’s way of life are constituted by contingency and arbitrary power relations. Returning to the present day we are now more able to see our meanings and values in a disturbing light – in turning backwards and inwards the historian is in search of the present.

Methodology is once again center stage in the final chapter as Baert considers the broadly naturalist and empiricist theories of positivism and falsification, both of whom tend to extend the method of the natural sciences to the human sciences, for example, by discovering laws (that is to say, empirical regularities) which may lead to predictions that can be tested. In contrast, and finally, Baert discusses the realist theory of science associated with Roy Bhaskar. Like other theories critical realism attempts to resolve the dualism between social structure (stressed by structuralists and functionalists) and agency (stressed by the interpretive theories). Again, such realism offers the prospect of social critique as does Habermasian “communicative action.” Baert, however, is dismissive of the *transformative* pretensions of Bhaskar’s transformational model of social action, which are “anything but.”¹⁷ The chief complaint, it seems, is the failure of critical

¹⁴Baert, *Social Theory*, 5.

¹⁵Baert, *Social Theory*, 5.

¹⁶Baert, *Social Theory*, 128-29.

¹⁷Baert, *Social Theory*, 197.

realism to grasp the true nature of reflection, a failure that leads to a tendency to conserve the social order despite critical intentions.

Baert records when each theory waxed and waned. Thus, the influence of positivism in the 1940s gave way in the 1950s to structuralism, functionalism, and falsification. These maintained their influence in the 1960s and were joined by interpretative theories. The 1970s saw the demise of functionalism, and the rise of Giddens, Bourdieu, Habermas, and the post-structuralists with their influence extending to the 1980s, a decade that also saw the rise of rational choice theory, which was joined by neo-functionalism in the 1990s. Baert notes the influence of Bhaskar's manifesto in the 1970s, and (we might surmise) its peak in the 1990s. Baert, perhaps, now regards critical realism as *passé*.

Having surveyed the terrain, Baert proceeds to offer some methodological suggestions for the social theorist. Rational choice theory, though not advocated, is praised for setting a good example in proposing clear, focused questions.¹⁸ (Here the grand theories of Talcott Parsons might be contrasted with the "middle-range" theories of his student, Robert Merton, whose work often led to quantifiable results.¹⁹) This is not to say that empirical research is to arbitrate between theories as empiricists might prefer. Rather, Baert envisages the possibility of the object of social research as a "source for inferring theoretical insight."²⁰ For example, in the sociology of literature the sociologist may herself learn from (literary) lay people. In fact, Baert would prefer the social theorist to be omnivorous in turning to other disciplines for insights into models that may provide innovative theory. He mentions "recent theories of the selfish gene, chaos theory, and dissipative structures, all of which seem to have interesting analogies in the social realm"²¹ – theology, incidentally, is *not* mentioned.²²

On social change, Baert notes the irony that while the earlier functionalists were criticized for social statics, the later functionalists (including the later

¹⁸Baert, *Social Theory*, 202.

¹⁹Baert, *Social Theory*, 54.

²⁰Baert, *Social Theory*, 203.

²¹Baert, *Social Theory*, 203.

²²The theologian John Milbank is sceptical about the secular project of social theory. I cannot discuss this, but see the excellent contribution of Neil Ormerod, who incidentally, was the first to initiate a conversation between the two kinds of critical realism that I have discussed here. "Dialectical Engagement with the Social Sciences in an Ecclesial Context," *Theological Studies* 66 (2005).

Parsons), by drawing on theories of biological evolution, were able to deal with it systematically. On the relations between social theory and (high) modernity, Baert is keen to advert to the phenomenon whereby social theory itself can, by being fed back to lay people, have an effect on the situation that it originally studied – for example, in the case of the “self-denying prophecy.”²³ Baert refers again to “reflection of the second order” and urges that theorists recognize the possibility that people are able to acquire theoretical, discursive knowledge, vis-à-vis previously tacit, shared rules. The contrast is with reflection of the first order which refers to people’s reflection on the meaning and effects of their (real or imaginary) actions – not on underlying rules and assumptions.²⁴

ROY BHASKAR ON AGENCY AND STRUCTURE

I shall now take a closer look at Roy Bhaskar’s philosophy. The “manifesto” (as Baert has it) is contained in the 1979 *The Possibility of Naturalism* which builds on the groundbreaking *Realist Theory of Science* (1975) so as to extend critical realism from the natural to the human sciences. By “naturalism,” Bhaskar does not necessarily imply a denial of transcendent or religious values (though, as standing within a broadly conceived Marxist tradition, such a position might plausibly be suggested), but rather a philosophy that, like positivism, and unlike hermeneutic theory, holds that a unified method applies to both the natural and human sciences: society is to be studied in the same way as nature.²⁵ Bhaskar, however, does not argue his case from positivist foundations. On the contrary, he believes that positivism completely misunderstands both the nature of empirical laws and the purpose of scientific experiment. The first task, then, is to recover a true understanding of the natural sciences.

The rather complex argument of *Realist Theory of Science* is summarized well in a short section of the first chapter of *Possibility of Naturalism*. I will introduce Bhaskar’s ideas, then, by drawing on this section entitled

²³Baert, *Social Theory*, 8.

²⁴Baert, *Social Theory*, 205-206.

²⁵As we shall see, in this respect there is a convergence with Lonergan who articulated a generalized empirical method that would apply not only to the data of sense, but also to the data of consciousness, and indeed, data constituted by meaning. For the final statement, see Bernard Lonergan, *A Third Collection* (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1985), 140.

"Experiment and Application: The Intransitive Dimension."²⁶ Bhaskar inquires about the conditions for the possibility of science; in particular, what is the intelligibility of experiment? He claims that "virtually no-one" has analyzed experiment, not even Elizabeth Anscombe, on whom Bhaskar had drawn to some extent.²⁷

In their scientific experiments scientists produce patterns of events. They act as the cause of a series of observable experiences. Bhaskar notes, however, that they do so in order to produce *significant* series of results under meticulously controlled conditions in order to make a discovery about the "mechanisms" that they do *not* produce.²⁸ The point is, of course, that whereas the scientist acts as an efficient cause for the regularities that she sees, there is no question of the scientist causing the mechanisms that generate these regularities. It is precisely these regularities that the scientist wants to discover; this is the end for which experiment is the means. There is, then, a "*real* distinction between the objects of experimental investigation, such as causal laws, and patterns of events" – this truth grounds the intelligibility of experimental activity. It follows, then, that Hume has misconceived the true nature of causal laws. Far from being the sequence of empirical regularities aligned in constant conjunction, causal laws remain distinct, aloof, so to speak, from the behavior of scientists. To suppose otherwise lands us with the absurd conclusion that scientific experiments alter the laws of the universe.

Not only do we discover these laws, but we may apply such knowledge. We do so when technology brings about regularities that would not otherwise occur (pressing this switch regularly makes the room bright, for example). Bhaskar distinguishes between closed systems (such as are produced artificially in laboratories, or which occur naturally – and rarely, Bhaskar feels – in recurrence schemes such as the solar system), and open systems, in which no such regularity is discerned (the fall of a leaf, say). The point is that closed systems represent special cases. In other words, the

²⁶Roy Bhaskar, *The Possibility of Naturalism* (Brighton, England: Harvester Press, 1979), 11-14. For a comparison with Lonergan, see Christopher Friel, "Lonergan and Bhaskar on the Intelligibility of Experiment," *Heythrop* (2014).

²⁷Bhaskar is referring to ideas that Anscombe noted first at the 1970 Lonergan conference, and later in her inaugural speech at Cambridge, which incidentally, Lonergan was happy to affirm (Bernard Lonergan, *Shorter Papers* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007], 283).

²⁸Here, again, we must not be misled; the word has no connotation of mechanistic determinism which Bhaskar staunchly refutes. Rather, by "mechanism," he means the causal powers or ways of acting of things taken roughly in an Aristotelian sense.

causal laws must be understood in terms of powers or tendencies that can (but might not actually) be exercised. These powers are actually exercised in the closed systems, but have the capacity to act beyond the boundaries of the closure: as Bhaskar puts it, causal laws are "transfactual" (standing beyond both closed and open systems). It is this transfactual "activity" of mechanisms that the pure scientist wants to discover, and the applied scientist wants to exploit. Experiment renders the transfactual actual, and by such intervention, renders the transfactual known, indeed, known as transfactual rather than as actual. To grasp this point is to grasp the ontological distinction between the empirical and the deeper levels of reality – reality is stratified. The actualist (someone who fails to enter into such deeper levels) is now caught in a dilemma when we inquire about what happens when the constant conjunctions do not obtain. Are we to say that nothing governs such phenomena? Or that we do not actually grasp universal laws (that is, laws that apply beyond closures)?

This is intuitively clear. We do not suppose that Ohm's law holds only in the laboratory, or only when our experiments "work." It is simply that when our experiments work we can observe the regularities that Ohm's law explains. In other words, not only is empirical regularity not sufficient for law as the idealist appreciates (law must be something more than regular happenstance), but empirical regularity is not even necessary for law (as per the botched experiment). In this fashion the transcendental realist can affirm the natural necessity of our world that is independent of human activity. Thus, in the right circumstances, in virtue of some mechanism M (unknown, perhaps, at first), event A regularly is followed by B.

Science aims at discovering such mechanisms which are said to be the *intransitive* objects of inquiry. By intransitive, here, Bhaskar refers to the real, what it is that we want to discover, what is regardless of whether we know it or not. As mentioned, there is an ontological gap between the mechanisms and laws of the intransitive dimension and their empirical grounds. Upon this, and against the positivist, Bhaskar insists. Of course, by our experiments we have actually acquired historically conditioned knowledge (the transitive dimension which, for example, the sociologist of knowledge may study), but Bhaskar is quite adamant that the intransitive realm stands beyond whatever experiments reveal. He has established a *realist* theory of science.

Let me pause at this point to suggest that Bhaskar's argument is generally speaking consonant with Lonergan's account, though I would just

enter three caveats. In the first place, Bhaskar's closures correspond roughly with Lonergan's recurrence schemes, and, I would suggest, Bhaskar tends to underestimate the prevalence of such schemes in our universe. Second, although Bhaskar draws on Aristotelian contingency (randomness) in his refutation of determinism, he makes no attempt (as Lonergan does) to acquire an objective knowledge of statistical science, and certainly Bhaskar makes no attempt in *Realist Theory of Science* to use such knowledge of objective randomness to articulate an account of emergence – despite the fact that Rom Harré, Bhaskar's doctoral supervisor (we may suppose), would have had this very point drummed into him by one of his doctoral students a few years earlier!²⁹ Third, in his eagerness to stress the intransitive dimension, Bhaskar tends not to thematize the wonder by which our mind is related to all of reality – by intention if not attainment. Lonergan calls this the “pure desire to know” – the intention of being.

I shall now very briefly consider Bhaskar's contribution to social theory by drawing on what is surely the *locus classicus*, namely, the second chapter of *Possibility of Naturalism*, “Societies,” in particular, the sections “Against Individualism” and “On the Society/Person Connection.”³⁰ As Baert has alerted us, this tackles the question of the dualism between agency and structure. Bhaskar aims to reconcile both, affirming in the fullest sense both the ontological reality of societies (and their properties) and also the ontological reality of the intentional acts performed by agents precisely in virtue of such societies. Doing justice to both structure and agency permits a transformational model of society that steers a middle way between methodological individualism and methodological holism, one that also opens up the possibility (as a Marxist would desire) of an account of the historical dynamics of world process.

A first step in reconciling structure and agency involves the affirmation of persistent patterns of relations in society, for example, the abiding distinctions between groups such as capitalist and worker. Although he does not speak, as Lonergan does, of grasping the significant explanatory relations, this seems to be Bhaskar's intention. He wants to ground a social science. Thus, opposing both the empiricism of Durkheim and the Neo-Kantianism of Weber, Bhaskar affirms that social science has a real object: it

²⁹See Philip McShane, *Randomness, Statistics, Emergence* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970).

³⁰Bhaskar, *Possibility of Naturalism*, 34-46. Both Baert and Smith refer to this section.

is neither a set of atoms, nor a collective, but a whole structured by relations. Society is stratified even as nature is.

Bhaskar proceeds to consider the causal link between societies and persons. In the Weberian model the direction of causality is from individual to society; the Durkheimian model reverses the direction of the causal arrow. The deficiencies of both, however, are evident: in the former we have actions but no conditions; in the latter we have conditions but no actions. Bhaskar considers a higher synthesis of the two, the dialectical model that he attributes to Peter Berger. He insists, however, that the distinctive contributions of structure and agency must not be obscured, and this he accents by the *transformational* aspect. The idea seems to be that although agents do indeed bring about changes in society, they do so, not by creating it (for society is prior to each individual at birth) but by reshaping it, changing society by the unintentional consequences of individual actions. For Bhaskar, the need to work on some preexisting matter rather than to create something anew is a truth that he takes to be fundamentally Aristotelian. For example, we might consider language. It exists prior to any individual speaker, but on the other hand, it is reproduced or transformed only as individual speakers use the language. This reproduction is not, properly speaking, an act of making on the part of any individual, and moreover, language has its own laws. Similarly Bhaskar entertains the possibility that laws may govern social change independent of particular intentions, as, for instance, in the causes that lead up to a revolution that brings about new social structures. Broadly speaking, Bhaskar's social science bears a family resemblance to Marxist theory. In intention, at least, he wants an account that may shed light on historical dynamics.

Let us recall Baert's criticisms. Not only is he unimpressed by the lack of originality that he finds in the transformational model of social action, but he is dismissive of the transformative potential of such theory. He finds that the transformational model of social action, like Giddens's concept of the duality of structure, "is strong in accounting for the *reproduction* of structures, but not in accounting for their *transformation*. In short, the realist contribution to social theory has a particular bias towards order, not change." The lacuna lies in a failure to recognize reflection of the second order. Whereas reflection of the first order refers to practical, tacit knowledge, second order reflection is theoretical and discursive. "Reflection of the second order arises through the confrontation with unanticipated

experiences; for instance, with unforeseen consequences of previous actions, or with different forms of life. Once reflection of the second order acquires public-collective features, it can become an important source of planned change, or deliberate maintenance."³¹

I shall not discuss the justice of such criticisms, though I suspect that much can be found in Bhaskar regarding reflection. I would simply make some biographical remarks. In setting out on his studies Bhaskar originally sought to respond to the challenge of poverty and economic injustice, and only turned to philosophy because he thought that key methodological issues needed resolution. Later, after *The Possibility of Naturalism*, Bhaskar underwent a spiritual turn and, resuming his given name of Ram, he began working to promote God consciousness in the Hindu tradition. On this note I will introduce the social ontology of an economist, methodologist, and theologian.

BERNARD LONERGAN'S SOCIAL ONTOLOGY

Having provided a map of contemporary social theory and an examination of one kind of critical realism we may now explore Bernard Lonergan's social ontology. Lonergan's project, of course, was not primarily to ground social theory, but rather (in *Insight*) to explore the phenomenon of the act of understanding, which, as he announces, provides him with a basis that opens up to all further developments of understanding.³²

Thus, in the later part of *Insight*, Lonergan refers to "ontology" in connection with the good, indeed within a metaphysical context that goes beyond the *human* good. This is highly relevant to social theory as will become clear if we review the foundations upon which the later parts build. These are laid earlier in a discussion of concrete "patterns of experience," in which developments of understanding arise, that is, first, within theoretical patterns of experience in which things are related one to another (science), and second as they are related to us (common sense). This topic is treated in two chapters, first, the sixth, "Common Sense and Its Subject" and then, the seventh, "Common Sense as Object." Roughly, the former deals with psychology and engages with Freud and the latter deals with sociology and engages with Marx.³³

³¹Baert, *Social Theory*, 197.

³²*Insight*, 22.

³³"Within the perspectives of the present work, there is no point to a full and accurate account

For our purposes, then, the seventh chapter is particularly significant, especially as it introduces “generalized empirical method”³⁴ – with Bhaskar, Lonergan seeks a normative and critical social science that can identify the radical principles of social change, indeed, transformation. This grounds a social ontology which Lonergan will develop in subsequent accounts of the “structure of the human good.” My intention, then, is to first review *Insight’s* sociological account of common sense, and then make some comments regarding the later contribution to social ontology.

The analysis of practical intelligence begins, then, by considering Arnold J. Toynbee’s schema of “challenge and response”³⁵ that Lonergan had encountered in reading *A Study of History* and, which we may suppose, Lonergan wanted to transpose into more explanatory categories.³⁶ Lonergan considers the “enormous structures”³⁷ of technology, economics, politics, and culture, and proceeds to build up an account of their emergence. Thus, the creation of a fishing net may be regarded as a response to the challenge of recurrent desires for a particular good, (fish), and Lonergan points out that in *each* age there is a measure and structure of capital formation that has the function of accelerating the flow of particular goods.³⁸ Moreover, the polity, too, has functionality, for “there is a need for leaders in times of stress.”³⁹ Lonergan does not regard power simply in terms of the struggle to dominate, but in the context of responses to communal challenges – cooperate or die, we might say. Because at any stage common sense is always in need of further insights, that is, new ideas need to emerge (and do so with some degree of

of the fields of psychology and of sociology. The topic is insight. To exhibit its nature and its implications, one has to venture into every department in which human intelligence plays a significant role. Still, that venture is essentially a limited venture” (*Insight*, 268).

³⁴*Insight*, 268.

³⁵*Insight*, 234.

³⁶Toynbee draws his categories from the Greeks, and Goethe, the Bible, and Shakespeare. See Bernard Lonergan, *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 64-65. Lonergan cites Toynbee: as illustrating how human intelligence works in history, Bernard Lonergan, *Topics In Education The Cincinnati Lectures of 1959 on the Philosophy of Education* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 53; in connection with the religious infrastructure, Bernard Lonergan, *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 268; in connection with the creative minority who respond to challenges, Bernard Lonergan, *Early Works in Theological Method I* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010); and in about thirty other places even up to 1982.

³⁷*Insight*, 232.

³⁸*Insight*, 233.

³⁹*Third Collection*, 7.

probability), Lonergan is able to situate this analysis of social change within the evolutionary worldview he has constructed at some length, and which he calls "emergent probability."⁴⁰ This is why he can generalize his empirical method to embrace data such as the acts of understanding of which we are conscious, and so envisage a method that unifies the natural and human sciences. Lonergan, then, can appreciate the biological metaphor for society so long as this is understood in an evolutionary way, and with the caveat that positivist prejudices regarding the data of conscious are overcome.

Nevertheless, Lonergan should not be regarded as a functionalist. In accounting for the development of civilization, Lonergan discerns two principles within a growing society, a "base" (or infrastructure) of intersubjective spontaneity (family, tribe, clan) out of which will arise a superstructural level of civil society associated with the ever growing structures (technology, economy, polity).⁴¹ Tension arises in the community: intersubjective spontaneity and intelligently devised social order possess different properties and different tendencies.⁴² Thus, a "dialectic" of community arises where here the term refers to the concrete unfolding of these linked but opposed principles of change. In this context Lonergan begins to discuss bias, that is, a radical interference with the "pure desire to know," – for Lonergan, the spirit of inquiry is the fundamental principle of social progress even as bias is the radical principle of social decline. Particularly relevant to social theory is individual bias (on the right, so to speak), and opposing this on the left, group bias.⁴³ In virtue of the distortions of bias, what would be a normative pattern in which concrete situations give rise to insights that lead to actions that change the initial situation so that fresh insights arise in a virtuous circle of progress (this is the pattern of challenge and response that Toynbee had drawn using descriptive categories), we find instead the narrowing of a vicious circle in which situations become infected by an irrational element that Lonergan terms the

⁴⁰Although Lonergan does not employ Toynbee's "challenge and response" schema to pre-human biological evolution, I think that this does very much capture the spirit of his conception of species as "solutions to the problem of living in an environment" (*Insight*, 290), and, as a matter of fact, one of the architects of the modern evolutionary synthesis *did* explicitly use Toynbee's schema. See Theodosius Dobzhansky, *Evolution in the Tropics*, <http://people.wku.edu/charles.smith/biogeog/DOBZ1950.htm>, originally published in the *American Scientist* 38 (1950): 209-21.

⁴¹*Insight*, 237-39.

⁴²*Insight*, 241.

⁴³*Insight*, 244-50. See also, *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 366.

"social surd" – the cumulative effect of refusing insights. For this reason, the concrete operations of society cannot be identified with the human good. Certainly, for Lonergan, the human good is always conceived in concrete terms, but he affirms that the good is never without evil. Functionalism, then, is a metonymic error. It mistakes the part for the whole. The human good does exist as a concretely operating "order" within society, but it cannot blithely be identified with society. It is precisely because Lonergan is sensitive to the effects of bias that he will formulate "ideal types" that schematizes cycles of progress and decline, so as to analyze social change involving the "social surd."

Is Lonergan a structuralist, then? Certainly, Lonergan does base his philosophy on the discovery of a structure. Namely, the cognitional structure that he finds in the "generalized empirical method" of human intelligence operating on three levels of experience, understanding, and judgement, with successive levels being promoted by the "pure desire" manifest in questions, What is it? Is it so? It is precisely the discovery of this structure that warrants Lonergan's conviction that Toynbee's intuitions of "challenge and response" can be recast in explanatory terms. We might even invoke the favored linguistic metaphor and suggest that Lonergan is giving us the fundamental "grammar of understanding and assent." Moreover, as this seventh chapter argues, an insight into cognitive structure may ground an equivalent structure of community – two levels of which have been explicated so far. But obviously, Lonergan's "structuralism" carries with it no connotations of the "death of the subject," and, patently, by the care that Lonergan takes in describing the phenomenology of the inquiring subject, Lonergan's structuralism is not averse to the many insights that might be gleaned from the interpretative schools.

Are we to conclude that Lonergan is blind to the insights into "second order reflection" that Baert has apprehended in post-structuralism? I would suggest that the long final section of Lonergan's seventh chapter argues to the contrary. For having diagnosed types of bias familiar to left and right, Lonergan steers us to the unfamiliar. He identifies the mysterious category of general bias, which stands in the way of the equally mysterious Cosmopolis: Lonergan clearly seeks a form of social critique that will go beyond both liberalism and Marxism. In what follows, I propose to read Lonergan's argumentative strategy as quite consonant with "second order reflection."

Noting the slow development of intelligence in the human animal,

Lonergan realistically observes that few of us make the spirit of inquiry the effective center of our lives. Worse, common sense is especially prone to rationalization even as every specialism fails to recognize the significance of other fields. This is invariably so as common sense does not reflect. For "it is incapable of analyzing itself, incapable of making the discovery that it too is a specialized development of human knowledge, incapable of coming to grasp that its peculiar danger is to extend its legitimate concern for the concrete and the immediately practical into disregard of larger issues and indifference to longterm results."⁴⁴ The upshot is a cycle of decline even more radical than that of group bias. Generally speaking, those who saw off the branches on which they are sitting eventually stop sawing, but the radical nature of general bias – to give it its name – is not so easily reversed.⁴⁵

Human beings tend to live in the short term. This is unfortunate, for, to "adapt a phrase from Marx"⁴⁶ we need not only to know history, but to direct it. But "common sense is unequal to the task of thinking on the level of history." Worse, it tends to refuse the long-term insights that it needs. Lonergan relates the implications of the "longer cycle of decline" – the social situation deteriorates, intelligence is deemed irrelevant, and the resulting social surd now becomes normative for all "solutions" if they are to be "practical." Such, Lonergan believes, is the story of Western civilization.

Lonergan then begins to sketch an alternative.⁴⁷ The solution cannot be on the level of common sense, for its concern with the particular renders it unequal to general bias. Indeed, it must – to take a second order reflective turn – somehow make use of the very theoretical insights that Lonergan has articulated in his account of emergent probability. That is to say, with Vico, Hegel, and Marx, it must avail itself of a "practical theory of history."⁴⁸ We are in need of a "higher viewpoint," or as we might say, a paradigm shift.

What is the higher principle? In this early chapter, Lonergan offers a series of notes. He affirms the principle of progress which is liberty, and so rules out a bureaucratic solution. The solution must get to the roots of the principle of decline, and this is bias. Turning explicitly to social theory, Lonergan faults the methodological errors of Durkheimian sociology

⁴⁴*Insight*, 251.

⁴⁵*Insight*, 250-51.

⁴⁶*Insight*, 253.

⁴⁷*Insight*, 257.

⁴⁸*Insight*, 258.

and positivism, and urges a truly critical human science – “a tall order.”⁴⁹ Lonergan affirms that the solution must pertain to culture:

What is necessary is a cosmopolis that is neither class nor state, that stands above all their claims, that cuts them down to size, that is founded on the native detachment and disinterestedness of every intelligence, that commands man's first allegiance, that implements itself primarily through that allegiance, that is too universal to be bribed, too impalpable to be forced, too effective to be ignored.⁵⁰

Still, what is cosmopolis? Lonergan treats the question heuristically as an algebraist solving an equation by designating it as an X, a known unknown. Thus, cosmopolis is not a police force; it is concerned to make operative the timely and fruitful ideas that otherwise are inoperative; it is not a busybody; it has to protect the future against the rationalization of abuses and the creation of myths. Above all, there “lies the almost insoluble problem of settling clearly and exactly what the general bias is.”⁵¹ Thus, a fuller solution comes to light in the final chapter in which, having argued for the existence of God, Lonergan poses the question of God's solution to the problem of evil. *Insight*, it transpires, is a contribution to Catholic apologetics, and Cosmopolis, we can easily suppose is to be identified with the church, the “sign raised aloft among the nations.”⁵²

Lonergan, however, seems to encourage a certain ambiguity as to just what Cosmopolis is. My reference to Isaiah's prophecy hinted at this, and here I would like to recall a remark from Lonergan's 1946 “The Notion of Sacrifice.” Alluding to the social theory of the “eminent sociologist” Pitrim Sorokin, Lonergan explains that “when a culture is religious, its poetry, graphic arts, and so forth, are full of symbols.”⁵³ In other words, Lonergan is appreciative of religiously “thick” descriptions that we might discern in the words of a prophet. Perhaps, then, the ambiguity of C/cosmopolis may be brought out by considering that the coming of Cosmopolis, like Advent,

⁴⁹*Insight*, 261.

⁵⁰*Insight*, 263. At times, however, cosmopolis is spelt with a capital C, for example, in the original typescript of the chapter.

⁵¹*Insight*, 263-66.

⁵²Bernard Lonergan, *Early Latin Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 457. *Dei Filius* (DS 3014) also cites this text from Isaiah 11:2.

⁵³*Early Latin Theology*, 9.

involves three moments. The liturgical season prepares us for Christmas, a Feast that celebrates the past event of the Nativity; it looks forward, to the Eschaton, the Second Coming of Christ; and it encourages a new birth today in the heart of the believer. Similarly, Lonergan never discourages us from identifying Cosmopolis with something that he regards as quite familiar, the Catholic Church. However, he also writes as if cosmopolis is *unfamiliar*, after all, in Lonergan's exposition the coming of cosmopolis seems to entail the birth of a new social theory. In the third place, however, Lonergan's introduction of Cosmopolis constitutes an existential challenge for the reader. By designating Cosmopolis as a known unknown, in effect, Lonergan is planting *now* the salient question in the mind of the reader for which a response is to be made; having raised the issue of bias, the challenge is to overcome it. Indeed, Toynbee's schema of challenge and response could not be more relevant here. By steering the discussion to the problem of ultimate values, Lonergan is presenting Cosmopolis as the ultimate response to the ultimate challenge: God's solution to the problem of evil.

Moreover, Lonergan is writing quite self-consciously. He seeks not merely to understand history but to direct it: his social theory anticipates the very influence that he hopes it will exert. This strategy – of taking an unfamiliar theoretical concept such as general bias which only Lonergan has ever articulated, and publishing it so that, by becoming accepted, social change may be brought about – presupposes on Lonergan's part, a recognition of something like Baert's second order reflection. In fact, Lonergan had implied as much, for in developing what he was to think of as a new paradigm in economic theory in the 1940s, and in considering the causes of economic exchange (what is it that makes a person buy or sell?), Lonergan announces that "we dismiss the causes of decisions to exchange, with one exception."⁵⁴

That exception is obvious. Economic science itself has to exert an influence on decisions to exchange. Otherwise it cannot be an applied science in a democracy, but only the applied science of a national laboratory in which a dictator presides, commissars rule, and a secret police ensures laboratory conditions.⁵⁵

⁵⁴Bernard Lonergan, *For a New Political Economy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 30.

⁵⁵*For a New Political Economy*, 30.

Indeed, drawing on the sociologist George Simmel, from 1962 Lonergan will frequently refer to the phenomenon of *die Wendung zur Idee*, the “shift to the idea.” This is the “tendency and even necessity of every large social, cultural, or religious movement to reflect on itself, to define its goals, to scrutinize the means it employs or might employ, to keep in mind its origins, its past achievements, its failures.”⁵⁶ Primarily Lonergan tends to apply this to theology, taken as a reflection on religion, which nonetheless has an influence on religion, but he will illustrate the idea in the history of law,⁵⁷ military theory,⁵⁸ economics (mercantilism),⁵⁹ and politics (democratic theory).⁶⁰

Let us now turn to the structure of the human good, in which we may discern Lonergan’s approach to the question of structure and agency. Lonergan worked the structure from 1943, adjusting and finessing his ideas for over thirty years.⁶¹ *Method in Theology* presents a grid. Here, the rows and columns are labeled, and the word “mediation” (that Lonergan had used in 1962) has been added in the third column:⁶²

	1	2	3	4
	Individual		Social Mediation	Ends
	Potentiality	Actuality		
A	Capacity, Need	Operation	Cooperation	Particular Good
B	Plasticity, Perfectibility	Development, Skill	Institution, Role, Task	Good of Order
C	Liberty	Orientation, Conversion	Personal Relations	Terminal Value

Lonergan presents this structure in the sixth section of the second chapter, that is, after presenting his “turn to the subject” (a first chapter on “transcendental method”) along with the amplifications regarding (the development of) skills, (the development of) feelings, (the principle of such development, namely) the notion of value, (the fruit of such

⁵⁶Bernard Lonergan, *A Second Collection* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1974), 159.

⁵⁷*Early Works in Theological Method I*, 539.

⁵⁸*Early Works in Theological Method I*, 679.

⁵⁹*Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 207.

⁶⁰*Early Works in Theological Method I*, 260.

⁶¹See Christopher Friel, “The Evolution of Lonergan’s Structure of the Human Good,” *Heythrop* 54, no. 5 (2013): 756-66.

⁶²*Method in Theology*, 48.

moral development, namely) the judgment of value, and (a preliminary discussion on one aspect of the fulfillment for which such development is the capacity, namely) beliefs. The "structure of the human good," I would say, represents a return to the object even as the later parts of *Insight* complete the earlier chapters that turn to the subject. We have here a contribution to social ontology.

The structure is actually three dimensional, as becomes clear when the following section is discussed. Obviously, the rows and columns indicate two dimensions, x and y respectively. However, even here Lonergan's subtlety might be missed. The idea, however, may be captured if we follow both the later (post-1968) and early (1962) presentation. From 1968, when Lonergan introduces his structure, he tends to begin by establishing the internal relations between the terms in cells A1, A2, and A4. Here we have individual development or change (Robinson Crusoe picks a berry, for example) – agency. Lonergan then continues to explain the relations between A3 and B3. Implied is the link between this row and column, because "largely, operating is cooperating." This is more explicit in 1962. That is, Lonergan begins by relating the terms of column 1, 2, and 3. So, for example, when an infant learns a language, a particular mother tongue will be socially mediated. "In virtue of the social mediation of the human good, operation becomes cooperation, acquired habits are matched by institutions, and orientations are matched by personal or interpersonal relations."⁶³ In other words, Lonergan's x-dimension apprehends agency within socially mediated structure. Lonergan may have thought that the point was obvious and so not needing explication in view of the fact that he places the socially mediating column after the first two and before the fourth.

The grid has rows as well as columns, and so we may speak also of a vertical, y-dimension, as Lonergan explains, the good arises on three levels. Moreover, as the subsequent section makes clear – and as every discussion of the human good in Lonergan shows – this society undergoes change, indeed, the threefold change of progress, decline, and recovery. This change, over larger time periods, may be called the t-dimension.⁶⁴

⁶³Early Works in Theological Method I, 35. The 1968 account can be found on pages 494-500. "Acquired habits" later becomes "Skills."

⁶⁴Strictly speaking, the human good does not suffer decline, but rather, the society that is constituted by the amalgam of the human good and the social surd does. Lonergan, quite properly, treats the question of the structure of the human good and social progress in distinct sections.

Lonergan's distinctive contribution lies in the vertical dimension. What is this? It is easy to give a simple answer. Lonergan's project was to thematize the "pure desire to know" which, for Lonergan, constitutes the foundation of all self-transcendence. So, we can state that it is this dynamism that provides the vertical vector. This is quite true, but what dynamic principle governs the horizontal vector? Surely, the same answer must be given, the principle of all self-transcendence, the pure desire to know. So, our question returns, what exactly is the specific difference between the forces exerted in the x and the y dimensions that Lonergan has in mind?

Let us recall that we can think of "learning" according to two dimensions. Imagine a sixteen-year-old student who specializes in applied mathematics. If she is bright our Newtonian neophyte will make good progress, and so rapidly acquire the knowledge that a genius (standing on the shoulders of giants!) acquired with considerable labor. Her learning has been mediated by his – if this were not so, progress in learning could not be passed on. More generally, and as we have seen, human intelligence gives birth to the "enormous structures" (of the technology, economy, legality, polity, diplomacy, and so on – institutions in the "good of order") that have emerged as responses to the challenges posed to communities. It is in this sense that the "pure desire" provides a y-dimensional vector. This "pure desire" extends to a third level (row C), one of value ("the object of rational choice"⁶⁵), or equivalently "cultural value" – on this level, of course, Lonergan will situate Cosmopolis. So, it would seem, Lonergan's analysis of Toynbee's "challenge and response" provides an insight into the problem of understanding the genesis of institutions (structures). I suggest, then, that our answer lies in the fact that in the x-dimension self-transcendence is mediated by social structures even as in the y-dimension social structures are mediated by self-transcendence (especially as communal challenges find their response). Once again, Lonergan's subtlety is easy to miss (as when, for example, we suppose that his reason for affirming that the good arises on three levels may be reduced to the fact that knowing also does).

Lonergan, incidentally, is keen to recall the historical nature of our institutions. Thus, while he did, in the context of social mediation, recall Berger and Luckmann's *Social Construction of Reality* (which Lonergan understood in terms of "belief" – the social construction of belief) he also

⁶⁵*Insight*, 624.

coupled this reference with a citation of Gadamer's *Truth and Method* which had discussed the effect of the historical working of tradition throughout the years.⁶⁶

Let us briefly note one possible corollary of representing the good on three levels that, as an economist, Lonergan was sensitive to. In characterizing certain goods as "merely" particular, and reserving the word "value" to a third level, Lonergan seems to distance himself from some versions of microeconomics ("value theory"), and so may be regarded as offering an alternative to rational choice theory. As we have seen, he held out hopes that his own responses to economic challenges would benefit society.

In conclusion, I suggest that, as inchoate as it is, Lonergan does possess a reasonably comprehensive social ontology that still possesses contemporary relevance. Lonergan's social theory promises an evolutionary account of functionality without ignoring the social surd and the influence of culture. It is based on a profound intentionality analysis that merits attention from interpretivists. From this basis it is able to give an original account of social structure that: does not neglect the subject; provides an interesting solution to the nature of structure and agency; and can also account for the origins of structures. Moreover, not only does it have the potential to go beyond rational choice theory, but more generally, it points the way to a (theologically sensitive) social critique. Anticipating some post-structuralist insights, it gives us a realist theory that does not neglect self-referentiality and second order reflection. I would also say that, in rooting its analysis in the fundamental structures of cognition, not only does Lonergan's social ontology possess an astonishing coherence, but it manifests a master-class in methodology. Of course, Lonergan was not a professional sociologist, and his ideas (which were formulated quite early in the century) were not translated into "middle-range" theories that would support empirically grounded research programs. Even so, it is difficult (to adapt a phrase from Lonergan himself) not to import his "compelling genius to the problems of this later day."

⁶⁶For example, Bernard Lonergan, *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 46. It is possible that, with Bhaskar, Lonergan might have had similar reservations to a reading of Berger that would obscure the historical nature of social construction.

CHRISTIAN SMITH AND THE SOURCES OF STRUCTURES

Turning now to this later day, I shall consider the wise, erudite, and stimulating work of a professional sociologist, indeed, one with expertise in the sociology of religion. Christian Smith seeks to encourage the project of critical realist personalism by promoting some unfamiliar aspects of social theory, incorporating this with personalist thought (especially virtue theory) and, as well, phenomenology which he believes may provide clarity and insight regarding foundational issues. He affirms the reality and emergence of persons giving us the thick description with which I opened, and introduces the resources on which he will draw, recommending their realist, anti-reductionist, and non-materialist⁶⁷ credentials. He critically engages some alternative forms of social theory including Berger and Luckmann, with whom he finds a measure of agreement on condition that relativism is eschewed, and network theory, provided that the reality of the terms of relations (persons, for example!) are not occluded. In the final, constructive part of the work Smith tackles the "central issue of the entire discipline ... the notion of social structure,"⁶⁸ and then in subsequent chapters two further issues that he finds closely aligned: the good (in which he finds that a neo-Aristotelian virtue theory is "our best account") and the mystery of personal dignity.

The heart of his social ontology is contained in his sixth chapter, "The personal sources of social structures." As the title indicates, Smith believes that it is the nature of persons that will explain the question with which we have tended to struggle, What actually gives rise to the social structuring of human life? His chapter addresses five topics. First, the ontology of social structures,⁶⁹ second, the sources of structures,⁷⁰ third, how social structures work,⁷¹ fourth, interlocking social structures,⁷² and fifth, how does social structural change ever happen?⁷³

I wish to explore these topics, particularly the second. My intention

⁶⁷Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 318

⁶⁸Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 5.

⁶⁹Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 317-29.

⁷⁰Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 329-45.

⁷¹Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 345-56.

⁷²Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 357-65.

⁷³Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 365-79.

will be to extract some broad lines in which Smith's account converges with Lonergan's. Obviously, some differences are to be expected in that Lonergan was not giving us a fine-grained social theory even as Smith does not enter into the intricacies of cognitional theory. I will recognize this, and indicate some differences which, I will suggest, point to a greater or lesser differentiation in two thinkers, but my chief concern is to first note similarities. I will suggest that the "ideal type" of challenge and response may provide a common denominator.

The first issue, then, concerns the nature of social structure, "the central theoretical concept in sociology."⁷⁴ As announced, it is to critical realism rather those theories which he has critically reviewed that Smith turns, for social structures are real, stratified entities, as are persons and their causal powers. To illustrate structures, Smith offers a series of concrete examples taken from various fields including: property relations between landowners, high school crowds, religious communities, law lobbies, management, the military, and transport. Smith discerns in them Bhaskar's insight regarding the persistent patterns of relations in society:

What is it that makes these situations "social structural"? Common to all of these examples and those in most theoretical approaches to social structures are three basic features. They all involve (1) human social relationships, (2) patterned systems comprised of parts, and, (3) temporal durability. Thus, something is not a social structure if it does not involve human social relations, is not some kind of arrangement of ordered components, and does not entail significant stability or continuity over time.⁷⁵

Smith then proceeds to put some flesh on his definition, noting that these durable patterns of human social relations are generated and reproduced through social interactions and accumulated and transformed historically over time. He draws attention to the material basis of such bodily practices, and the way that they are defined by culturally meaningful cognitive categories, motivated in part by normative and moral valuations and guides, and controlled and reinforced by regulative sanctions which therefore promote cooperation and conformity and discourage resistance

⁷⁴Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 317.

⁷⁵Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 322.

and opposition. Among the several points that he makes, Smith stresses that for “social structures to be and do what they are and how they operate presupposes the activity of personal human agents of exactly the sort I am theorizing in this book.”⁷⁶

Turning to the second topic, the genesis of social structures, Smith asks, What brings social structures into being and why? He has found no satisfactory answer to this question, but goes on to claim that critical realist personalism has one. It “points us toward the natural capacities and limitations of human persons and the creative tensions that arise between them.”⁷⁷ Smith’s metaphor for this creative tension is interesting, “Human social life, I suggest, is the magma that erupts and builds up, so to speak, at the fault lines where natural human capacities meet and grind against and over natural human limitations.”⁷⁸ Here I would like to suggest that an alternative metaphor of a response surmounting a challenging barrier is not too distant from his general idea.

Smith explains how “social structures emerge from the confrontation of human capacities and limitations.” On the one hand, there is a principle of transcendence, so to speak. Human capacities “propel persons into world-engaging activities of bodily action, subjective experience, moral evaluation, material fabrication, and social interaction.”⁷⁹ On the other hand, this encounters a principle of limitation – the many natural limitations of human persons.

In order to continue to live out life as the kind of creatures they are – that is, as persons – humans work to develop a variety of solutions, tools, practices, procedures, and systems that nurture and advance their natural capacities, given the facts of their natural limitations. Some of these are material, others are cognitive and affective, and yet others are relational. In all cases, a central accomplishment of personal existence on behalf of capacities over limitations is the overcoming of a variety of forms of loss, discontinuity, instability, unpredictability, and disruption. The latter – which are directly tied to human capacities and finitude – not only make life instrumentally inefficient and sometimes

⁷⁶Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 329.

⁷⁷Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 331.

⁷⁸Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 331.

⁷⁹Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 339.

impossible but also obstruct personal existence, the achievement of robust personhood.⁸⁰

Recalling his definition of a person, "a conscious, reflexive, embodied, self-transcending center of subjective experience, durable identity, moral commitment, and social communication who – as the efficient cause of his or her own responsible actions and interactions – exercises complex capacities for agency and intersubjectivity in order to develop and sustain his or her own incommunicable self in loving relationships with other personal selves and with the nonpersonal world," Smith finds that it is "*the natural drive toward a sustained and thriving personal life broadly – more so than motivations for, say, material advantage, relational dominance, or ontological security more exclusively – when confronted with our natural limitations, that generates social structures out of human existence.*"⁸¹ This point is illustrated by a consideration of the multiple needs that are met in the family, and Smith then generalizes the insight to other social structures. As I have suggested, this idea, roughly, is that structures are the responses to personal challenges. After all, were there no limitations, there could be no challenges, and were there no transcendence, there could be no response. What is certain is that Smith foregrounds the way that *his* account "brings in a sense of moral orientation, identity concerns, embodied action, and even spiritual experience, which some of those theories tend to discount or ignore in various ways."⁸²

Rather than reproduce the rich quality of Smith's answer to the third question, How do structures work?, I shall simply try to convey the general idea. Roughly, it is that institutional structures tend to operate in society the way a habit operates in an individual. Thus we tend to "go with the flow" like ice-skaters who arrive late at the rink; we bow to the peer pressure in a way that encourages conformity; we find the status quo too costly (in material terms, for example) to change; we buy into the conventional wisdom of the ways that things are and always have been; our bodily routines just continue on automatic pilot; we feel upon our shoulders the weight of historical tradition making its presence felt, and so on. Smith notes

⁸⁰Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 339

⁸¹Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 340 (emphases in original).

⁸²Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 345.

some affinities with Giddens's "duality of structure," and also, Bourdieu's genetic structuralism.⁸³

The fourth point regards the interlocking nature of social structures, for what we call societies "consist of massive conglomerations of distinct but tightly linked social structures in larger structural environments."⁸⁴ There are many kinds of social structures, for example, familial, political, economic, residential, racial, occupational, educational, gender, friendship, and so on. He describes the elements of any social structure as "hooked up" with the elements of other structures, "like Velcro," and he proceeds to give a rich description of school financing to illustrate what the hooks look like. Smith is able to convey with some insight the gridlock that militates against change even as "all engines are running and everyone wants to move, no vehicle is able to move far because no other vehicle is able to move far."⁸⁵ The idea stands in comparison with Lonergan's notion of the "good of order," comprising of a series of institutions which may become dysfunctional as per an economic depression. Smith will allude to the "horizontal and vertical" nature of the grid, where the terms are taken from commerce – the vertically integrated firm will own businesses dealing with all aspects of serving coffee, from the "chic café in the upscale coffee mall at the top" to the "coffee plantation at the bottom," and once again he illustrates his point concretely (from the field of education). Horizontal integration involves the interconnection of social structures that serve "similar functions or that operate on similar levels of scale or authority."⁸⁶ The point is illustrated from the free-market religious economy that he gave as an example at the start of this chapter.⁸⁷ Having provided such rich descriptions of the multiple nature of such hooks, Smith gives us an insight into the challenges that face someone who would seek to change society. Surely drawing on intimate knowledge of the field, Smith provides a particularly brilliant illustration of a liberation theologian seeking to change exploitative labor relations in a Central American country, and the many difficulties that he or she faces.⁸⁸

⁸³Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 356.

⁸⁴Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 357.

⁸⁵Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 359.

⁸⁶Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 360.

⁸⁷Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 360.

⁸⁸Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 362-64.

Still, the contiguous nature of such structures also affords the possibility of change, the topic of the final section.

How does social structural change ever happen? Smith gives a heterogeneous aggregate of factors, "including purely exogenous shocks like natural disasters" and as well "(1) establishing new or terminating old relations between groups, (2) alterations in the basic cognitive categories that constitute structures, (3) changes in flows of material resources or bearings of relevant expressive material objects, (4) modifications of moral and normative orders implicated in structures and emotional reactions to the violation of established moral or normative beliefs, (5) the weakening of sanctions that police conformity to structural expectations and imperatives, (6) decreases in the intractability of dispersed interaction processes, and (7) disruptions of normal reiterated body practices and collective activity currents. Rarely do changes in only one of these factors transform social structures."⁸⁹

Contingency, then, rather than empirical regularity plays its part, but Smith counsels that we should try to descriptively establish "the various constituent elements operative in any specific case of a structured event or outcome in question, identifying the underlying causal mechanisms that sustain the structure, analyzing how the elements and mechanisms work together to produce the relevant events and outcomes, and, if appropriate, identifying forces of agency and structure that operate to generate social structural change." That is to say, we are to embrace a critically realist (as opposed to positivist) notion of explanation.⁹⁰

Let us take in the trajectory of Smith's argument. Commencing with graphic, concrete examples taken from human experience, Smith nonetheless does not remain on the experiential level. His sociological imagination is informed by wonder, and his desire to understand bears fruit in conception and judgement – structures are real, stratified entities. The quest for insight persists, What brings such structures into being? The question finds an answer in the nature of the limited and self-transcending person, that is, we find the origins of structures in something akin to "challenge and response." From this basis Smith builds. But the analysis is quite concrete, and so in the tightly meshed social situation we find that the good is not without evil. However, a further question can be discerned, How can we respond to the

⁸⁹Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 377-78.

⁹⁰Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 379.

challenge of evil and separate the wheat from the tares? Social theory has been weighed in the balance and found wanting, but Smith has sketched an alternative. In the conclusion of his work Smith will urge that sociology should avail itself of critically realist personalism. In view of the nature of the challenge, such a response is well worth the cost.

CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE

I have argued for a convergence between two kinds of critical realism. I have done so by recommending the pattern of "challenge and response" as a hermeneutic key that can unlock both Lonergan's chapter on common sense as object, and the centerpiece of Lonergan's social ontology, the structure of the human good. I have argued that Christian Smith, too, in his inquiry about the origin of social structures arrives at a very similar conclusion, reading his volcanic eruption that arises as limitation clashes with transcendence in these terms. I think, then, that here we have two instances of what a cognitional theorist would call an "insight."

Moreover, if I am on the right lines then it seems that by explicating his question as Smith does, we can appreciate a little better what Lonergan was up to. It would seem that in his seventh chapter Lonergan was already proposing an answer to the question that Smith finds neglected, namely, What is the origin of social structures? I speculated that a neat answer may be discerned in the two dimensions of the grid that Lonergan worked on for over thirty years. Briefly, the horizontal (x) axis indicates a dynamism whereby self-transcendence is mediated by social structures/institutions, and the vertical (y) axis indicates the dynamism whereby social structures are mediated by self-transcendence. Thus Lonergan tries to capture an insight both into the relations between structure and agency, and also the way that agency brings about structures.

From this vantage point we can discern the specific difference of Lonergan's method. He gives us an analysis that endeavors to apprehend key explanatory variables. His object is not, at first, the social situation, but the concrete and intelligible reality that he came to call "the human good." That is, he prescind from the social surd – though not the third level of cultural value: in building what I have called a social ontology Lonergan attends to something that is simultaneously less and more than the social. He is, of course, very concerned with the social surd, and although I did not reference

it, we can note here that some of Lonergan's interesting contributions to social ontology remain unpublished. Thus, in his *Supplement to the Incarnate Word*, Lonergan gives us an interesting account of social redemption. The good on three levels (particular goods, goods of order, cultural values) is set over and against particular evils, "evils of order," and cultural evils. One facet of Lonergan's discussion regards the way that good may be brought out of evil – particular evils provide a challenge and a response is met by the good of order; evils of order provide a challenge that is met by cultural value.⁹¹ This is a theological perspective that is open to grace – the ultimate response to the ultimate challenge.

In contrast, Smith's methodology is more concrete and synthetic. As I have gestured, it is redolent with "thick" descriptions taken from contemporary American culture. It is informed by the sociological imagination even as Lonergan's methodology is informed by the soteriological imagination. It has, I think, certain advantages over Lonergan's approach for it lends itself better to empirical research (in some respects). Of course, Lonergan's approach has certain advantages too, as he may have supposed. Thus, he was perfectly happy to praise the brilliant theories of development that he found in Jean Piaget while noting that the "grand blocks" that he drew up were more appropriate for his purposes.⁹² Here we may underline the significance, for Lonergan, of the relations between theology and the dynamics of history⁹³ – it did not escape Lonergan that in his epic study of history Toynbee eventually came to appreciate the dynamic and transforming role of religion.⁹⁴ Obviously, Smith is not blind to this reality. Indeed, in a contribution to the sociology of religion he begins by noting the sea change of Peter Berger regarding the secularization thesis.⁹⁵ However, it might not be amiss to recall the eventful life of Pitrim Sorokin. In his childhood travels with his father painting religious icons in pre-revolutionary Russia, he acquired a profound sensitivity to the power of symbols, and the importance of mystery that was to inform his sociology. Interestingly, Baert (who is not overtly attuned to religious issues) concludes his work on twentieth-century

⁹¹Bernard Lonergan, *Supplement on the Incarnate Word* (unpublished material).

⁹²*Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 109.

⁹³Here see Robert M. Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

⁹⁴*Early Works in Theological Method I*, 256.

⁹⁵Christian Smith and Robert Woodberry, "Sociology of Religion," in Judith Blau (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to Sociology* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 2001).

social theory by noting how, "confronted with the collapse of the Soviet Union, several ethnic groups started to reflect on their lost culture, language, and political economy, and tried to revitalize these. This example shows the extent to which collective reflection of the second order often goes together with a symbolic reconstruction of the past."⁹⁶

Baert, we recall, faults critical realism on these grounds. With its naivety, its lack of self-referentiality, its quotidian preference for the familiar, and its absence of self-reflection, he feels that it has had its day. I have suggested that Lonergan may help the critical realist respond to this challenge. Thus, although one may find about two hundred references to "understanding" in the first two hundred pages of *What Is a Person?*, we find no explicit thematization of just what it is to understand⁹⁷ – but it is to this unfamiliar task that Lonergan invites us. One benefit of taking up this invitation is that in appropriating the act of insight we are presented not only the act that Aquinas believed perfectly demonstrated the power and nature of the soul,⁹⁸ but also the act that as Lonergan also explains is the prototype of all emergence.⁹⁹ And although Smith frequently insists that reflection is definitive of personhood, we seem to find in the dozens of places in which it is alluded to, that such reflection is only ever of Baert's "first order." As we have seen, with his sensitivity to Simmel's shift to the idea, Lonergan's methodology is not so vulnerable to the post-structuralist critique. This may point us in the direction of a foundational methodology of which Smith seems unaware.¹⁰⁰

To sum up, I began with a contemporary, comprehensive introduction to social theory that suggested that critical realism was being superseded: because it did not do justice to "second order reflection," its claims to transformation were pretentious. I gave an exposition of Bhaskar's achievement, noting his affinity with Lonergan in seeking a scientific, normative social critique. I then showed how Lonergan's sociology takes as its point of departure the scheme of challenge and response and suggested that this enables Lonergan to discern the origins of social structure, or more

⁹⁶Baert, *Social Theory*, 206.

⁹⁷But see Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 22n30.

⁹⁸*Summa Theologiae*, 1.88.2.ad. 3.

⁹⁹*Insight*, 506.

¹⁰⁰For a careful statement of the sense in which Lonergan can be regarded as a foundationalist, see Michael H. McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy* (New York: SUNY Press, 1990).

accurately, the structure of human good. In this heuristic device, Lonergan has a general category that opens up to the ultimate question of challenge and response – in my presentation I also read Lonergan as anticipating Baert's challenges on second order reflection. This account set the context for my reading of Smith's inquiry into the origin of social structures. I found his solution in the tension of limitation and transcendence in human persons consonant with Lonergan's. My purpose was to reflect on the respective methodologies of the two critical realists and to argue that in many ways they may complement one another. Bernard Lonergan and Christian Smith formulated similar social ontologies in response to similar challenges.

THE REALISM OF CHRISTIAN SMITH'S "CRITICAL REALIST PERSONALISM"

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BOTH CHRISTIAN SMITH and Bernard Lonergan refer to their positions as "critical realism." Lonergan developed his philosophic position of critical realism in his work *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (1957). Christian Smith introduces a sociological approach he calls "critical realist personalism" in his innovative work *What Is a Person?: Rethinking Humanity, Social Life, and the Moral Good from the Person Up* (2010). The brand of critical realism that underpins Smith's account is not the philosophic position advanced by Lonergan half a century earlier. As Smith acknowledges, "Critical realism is a postpositivist and Post-Winchean philosophy of (social) science that was expressed originally in the form I appropriate here by the British philosopher Roy Bhaskar. . . ." Bhaskar argued for a revolutionary "transcendental realism" later called "critical realism" in his *A Realist Theory of Science* (1975).¹ The question arises just what is meant by the critical realism that Smith employs as the foundation of his approach to the social sciences; and in what sense is that metaphysical ground critical. The following contribution is a limited dialectical examination along the lines

¹Bhaskar offers the following explanation for how he came to use the term "critical realism" for his philosophy: "I had called my general philosophy of science 'transcendental realism' and my special philosophy of the human sciences 'critical naturalism.' Gradually people started to elide the two and refer to the hybrid as 'critical realism.' It struck me that there were good reasons not to demur at the mongrel. For a start, Kant had styled his transcendental idealism the 'critical philosophy.' Transcendental realism had as much right to the title of critical realism." See his *Reclaiming Reality* (London and New York: Verso, 1989), 190; cited in Andrew Collier, *Critical Realism: An Introduction to Roy Bhaskar's Philosophy* (London and New York: Verso, 1994), xiin1. Whether Bhaskar's so-called transcendental realism has the right to be called 'critical' is precisely the point of contention in this paper.

of Lonergan's method of metaphysics into the critical realism of Bhaskar, which underlies Christian Smith's approach.

In chapter 14 of *Insight* Lonergan develops a dialectical metaphysical method, a method of philosophy. He introduces the key terms "positional" and "counterpositional" to designate criteria by which to assess the various philosophic standpoints in the contemporary philosophic scene and in the history of philosophy. According to Lonergan, a philosophy or a philosophic pronouncement is positional:

(1) if the real is the concrete universe of being and not a subdivision of the "already out there now"; (2) if the subject becomes known when it affirms itself intelligently and reasonably and so is not known yet in any prior "existential" state; and (3) if objectivity is conceived as a consequence of intelligent inquiry and critical reflection, and not as a property of vital anticipation, extroversion, and satisfaction.²

On the other hand, a philosophy or a philosophic pronouncement is counterpositional "if it contradicts one or more of the basic positions."³ After defining these basic terms, Lonergan designates the central dialectical task of philosophic method as developing positions and reversing counterpositions. The second half of this chapter consists of demonstrations of his method of metaphysics in action. Lonergan critiques various deductive methods, the method of universal doubt, various forms of empiricism, and finally commonsense eclecticism.

In this paper, I am limiting my aim to identifying the foundational elements of Bhaskar's critical realism, informing Smith's critical realist personalism, that contradict the position as outlined by Lonergan. Identification is the first step in reversing a counterposition. I will show that even though Lonergan, Bhaskar, and Smith following Bhaskar, use the term "critical realism" they mean quite different things by it. In light of Lonergan's critique of various methods of metaphysics, especially empiricism, it will become clear that Bhaskar's realism is not critical but, what Lonergan would call, naïve and dogmatic. Inasmuch as Smith affirms the critical realism of

²Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (1957), vol. 3 of the Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 413.

³*Insight*, 413.

Roy Bhaskar as foundational for his own approach to the social sciences, it behooves us to outline the latter's fundamental ontology.⁴

SMITH'S CRITICAL REALIST PERSONALISM

Before we take up an analysis of Bhaskar's thought, it should be noted just how innovative and valuable Smith's new approach of critical realist personalism promises to be. With his appropriation of Bhaskar's realism that is critical of Humean, positivist empiricism on the one hand and of postmodern constructivism on the other, he develops a scientific worldview that posits reality as stratified and complex, and so contra materialist reductionism. He adopts a view of open systems, of multi-level scientific fields that allows for a notion of emergence. As he explains:

The combination or interaction of two or more phenomena at one level often gives rise through *emergence* to new phenomena at a higher level, which possess characteristic properties and capacities that are irreducible to their constituent parts at the lower level from which they emerged.⁵

In addition, the reality of causation is affirmed. He retrieves causation as proper subject matter for the sciences by jettisoning Hume's empiricism. With his well-known billiard ball example, Hume argued that we never actually experience causality, so we must be content with mere beliefs about how things happen based on our perception of the constant conjunction of events. This argument of Hume's famously awoke Kant from his "dogmatic slumbers" and inspired him to write his first *Critique*. In contrast, Smith simply asserts the reality of causation without contending with Hume's argument. He states that "Humean skepticism about and redefinition of causation is interesting but misguided," but he does not proffer a reason why it is misguided.⁶ He advises that scientific inquiry ought to be concerned with causal relations rather than with the regularity of observable events, but he does not explain how we can know these causal relations, which we

⁴Christian Smith, *What Is a Person?: Rethinking Humanity, Social Life, and the Moral Good from the Person Up* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), 90-91.

⁵Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 95.

⁶Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 95.

do not observe. "Again," Smith adds, "the focus is more on the nature of the real than on the events of the empirical."⁷ I suspect that the nature of the real was also of concern for both Hume and Kant, but they recognized the need to take up the preliminary problem of cognition by which we might arrive at the real. Importantly, Smith does not limit reality to what is observable or accessible to sense perception. He accepts that "reality can be nonmaterial."⁸ This not only allows the subject matter of contemporary physics to be investigated and treated as real, for example, quarks, vibrating strings, and n-dimensions; it also allows dimensions of the social world, hitherto largely neglected by positivistic social scientists, to be scientifically studied and treated as real, for example, meaning and values. By rejecting positivist presumptions, he is also able to overcome the specious fact/value divide and to conceive of the social sciences as critically engaging the world in "normative, prescriptive, and moral terms."⁹

This brings us to perhaps the most valuable aspect of Smith's approach, his personalism. He draws on a number of well-known personalist thinkers in developing his notion of personalism including Maritain, Polanyi, Wojtyla, Schmitz, and Taylor. The central principle of his approach is that "Human beings are persons."¹⁰ He defines a person as the following:

A conscious, reflexive, embodied, self-transcending center of subjective experience, durable identity, moral commitment, and social communication who – as the efficient cause of his/her own responsible actions and interactions – exercises complex capacities for agency and intersubjectivity in order to sustain his or her own incommunicable self in loving relationships with other personal selves and with the nonpersonal world.¹¹

He agrees with Taylor that to provide an adequate account of persons it is indispensable to speak in terms of morality, values, and human dignity.¹² And in line with the principles of his critical realism, he avers that even

⁷Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 96.

⁸Smith, *What Is a Person?* 96.

⁹Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 93.

¹⁰Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 102.

¹¹Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 103.

¹²Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 107.

though these are not tangible, they are inescapably real.

I do not so much find fault with Smith's general aims and ultimate pronouncements, especially, when it comes to his laudable views on human persons. This is, in my opinion, the positional aspect of Smith's thought and it invites development. The problem is rather with how he arrives at his principles. He indicates his starting point: "As scientists we must presuppose the reality of that which is – it cannot be constrained by limits on what is knowable."¹³ I interpret him to mean by "knowable" here, given the context of this passage, what is available to sensory observation. If he means by "knowable" what is intelligible, then he is advocating that we presuppose that reality is unintelligible, which would undermine the whole enterprise of science. The initial presupposition implies an empiricist view of knowing. Next, he advocates a methodological procedure: "First we come to terms with what we believe is, and what it is like, then we examine the possibilities for knowing about it."¹⁴ He then articulates the ultimate aim of science: "The point of science is to conform the shape of our minds to the nature of reality that exists beyond (but also including) our minds."¹⁵ In short, Smith begins with reality and then seeks to conform the human mind to this reality. As will become clear in the discussion of Bhaskar, this aim to "conform the shape of our minds to the nature of reality" is pre-critical and pre-Kantian. This approach is the opposite of the turn to the subject, the critical moment of early modern philosophy; it is taking one's stand firmly in reality and beginning there.

Husserl points out in *The Idea of Phenomenology* that the problem of cognition, how we can objectively know what is real, does not occur to one in the natural standpoint, which is the standpoint presumed by men and women of common sense and science:

Natural thinking in science and everyday life is untroubled by the difficulties concerning the possibility of cognition. *Philosophical thinking* [on the other hand] is circumscribed by one's position toward the problems concerning the possibility of cognition.¹⁶

¹³Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 93.

¹⁴Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 93.

¹⁵Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 94.

¹⁶Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, trans. W. P. Alston and G. Naknikian (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1983), 1.

To be fair, Smith is writing as a sociologist not primarily as a philosopher. It is Bhaskar, as a philosopher of science, who develops the fundamental ontology, which Smith mines for his critical realist personalism. So, let us turn to the source and examine Bhaskar's account of critical realism.

BHASKAR'S CRITICAL REALISM

For an overview of Bhaskar's philosophy, we can consider his view of the role of philosophy, the main aim of his philosophic work *A Realist Theory of Science*, key elements of his metaphysics or ontology, and his assessment of Hume and Kant. Bhaskar is a philosopher of science, and he conceives the role of philosophy to be serving science; he confesses that he shares John Locke's motives in viewing philosophy "as the under-labourer, and occasional mid-wife, of science."¹⁷ This conception of the merely subsidiary role of philosophy in relation to the sciences contrasts with Lonergan's view of philosophy's relation to the sciences. As explicit metaphysics, philosophy, for Lonergan, underlies, penetrates, and orders into an intelligible whole all other fields of knowledge including common sense, mathematics, the natural sciences, and the social sciences.¹⁸ Their contrary views on the role of philosophy, I contend, are not a function of the presence or absence of disciplinary humility, but rather a function of the difference in their fundamental stands on knowing, objectivity, and the real. Bhaskar is concerned with knowledge insofar as it is the knowledge successfully produced by science as a social endeavor. His notion of objectivity is what is completely independent of the subject (of the process of knowing); it is the facts of reality that are out there already. His view of reality, briefly, is the things and structures that exist independently of us, to which scientific activity provides access.¹⁹ This elevation of science over philosophy aligns Bhaskar's metaphysics with commonsense eclecticism's unquestioning belief in science.²⁰ But, we will see that his position is largely a brand of empiricist metaphysics with characteristics of deductivist methods.

The aim of Bhaskar's major work *A Realist Theory of Science* is to develop a systematic realist account of science as a comprehensive alternative to

¹⁷Roy Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science* (1975) (London: Verso, 1997), 10.

¹⁸*Insight*, 417.

¹⁹Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science*, 9.

²⁰Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science*, 442.

the positivism that has dominated the sciences since Hume.²¹ His realist account is an ontology consisting of three realms and three basic kinds of objects. The three realms are the real, the actual, and the empirical; the real encompasses the actual and the empirical, and in turn the actual encompasses the empirical. The three kinds of objects are mechanisms, events, and experiences.²² By "mechanisms" Bhaskar basically means the powers of things: "the generative mechanisms of nature, which provide the real basis of causal laws . . . is nothing other than a way of acting of things."²³ Mechanisms, events, and experiences are all real, events and experiences may also be actual, and experiences may also be empirical. The empirical refers to what we have experienced, the actual refers to all the phenomena and events that have occurred including what we have experienced, and the real refers to the generative mechanisms and causal structures that give rise to the actual and the empirical. The real also includes mechanisms and structures that have the unrealized potential to give rise to the actual and the empirical. Thus, the real as comprising already operating mechanisms and structures and the potentialities of these mechanisms is a broader, or deeper, category than the actual, and hence, the empirical.

As Frank Pearce points out, the meaning of these metaphysical concepts is somewhat slippery in Bhaskar's works. The exact modal status of events for Bhaskar is particularly difficult to sort out:

Bhaskar writes "The world consists of mechanisms and not events," but then in the next sentence he adds, "Such mechanisms combine to generate the flux of phenomena that constitute the actual states and happenings in the world." It is hard to see what events are if not "states and happenings." Later [in *A Realist Theory of Science*] in a discussion of the nature of "scientific laws" he states that "for these features to be possible the world must be composed of agents." Does he mean by this that agents alone are essential?²⁴

²¹Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science*, 12.

²²Bhaskar provides a helpful chart depicting the logical relation of these categories; see page 13 of *A Realist Theory of Science*. Smith appropriates Bhaskar's metaphysical categories in the development of his critical realist personalism.

²³Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science*, 51.

²⁴Frank Pearce, "Bhaskar's Critical Realism: An Appreciative Introduction and a Friendly Critique," in *Critical Realism and the Social Sciences: Heterodox Elaborations*, ed. Jon Frauley and Frank Pearce (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 50-51.

In the above passage, if we understand by “world” what Bhaskar calls the “real,” Pearce has indeed unearthed a difficulty. Bhaskar designates initially in his ontological chart that the real consists of mechanisms, events, and experiences. But, here he claims that events are not a part of the real; they are only actual, not real or experienced. So, the ontological status of events is left unresolved. It seems to make more sense in Bhaskar’s scheme to categorize events (and experiences for that matter) as only actual rather than real and potential. And, apparently this is what he is asserting when he writes that “the world must be composed of agents.”²⁵ If we again take “world” here to mean the real, “agent” refers to the underlying, non-actual, and non-empirical, mechanisms of things, which generate the actual and the empirical objects. As the source of generation of the actual and the empirical, a mechanism acts as a causal agent in the Aristotelian sense of the efficient cause of change. For Bhaskar the “enduring and continually active mechanisms of nature that produce the phenomena of the world” are deeper metaphysical structures than actual events and experiences, and, as such, are properly real.²⁶ Pearce observes:

There seems here an implicit belief that whatever produces the component parts of the things that together constitute a particular level of phenomena is more basic than the interactions between these things and their emergent properties, which seems to imply that deeper levels are more real than more accessible levels.²⁷

Basically for Bhaskar, the less empirical and actual a metaphysical element is, the more fundamental and real it is. I do not take this to be in conflict with his affirmation of reality as allowing emergence on multi-levels. Rather it expresses his valuation of these objects and realms in terms of their importance in his metaphysics.

Bhaskar’s philosophy of science is based on the conception of a “world without men”²⁸ Not only is such a state of affairs intelligible and possible, it is necessary to the very meaning of science that we consider reality as carrying

²⁵Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science*, 109.

²⁶Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science*, 47.

²⁷Pearce, “Bhaskar’s Critical Realism,” 51.

²⁸Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science*, 47.

on without human involvement or knowledge.²⁹ If there were not a reality existing independently of any subjects, there would not be that against which scientific theories are measured, revised, and developed. (We will take up this implicit notion of objectivity as counterpositional below.) For Bhaskar there are two kinds of objects of science – transitive and intransitive. Transitive objects are the cumulative products of scientific activity, which serve as material or stockpile for future scientific investigations, formulations, and revisions. An intransitive object of science, on the other hand, is “the real structure or mechanism that exists and acts quite independently of men and the conditions which allow men access to it.”³⁰

Related to this distinction of transitive and intransitive objects is Bhaskar’s formulation of the “epistemic fallacy” that “statements about being can always be transposed into statements about our knowledge of being.”³¹ To commit this fallacy, in his eyes, leads to a dissolution of an objective world independent of epistemological scaffolding. Rather, he aims in his work to establish that scientific activity necessitates that the objects of science are intransitive; that is, they exist independently of our knowing or even of our being. Bhaskar finds both Humean positivists and Kantians, among others, to be guilty of the epistemic fallacy. A. J. Ayer, for example, commits it when he argues that if a proposition is not empirically verifiable or a tautology, it is meaningless. Kant commits the fallacy when he argues, in the context of transcendental theology, that the categories of understanding “allow only of empirical employment and have no meaning whatsoever when not applied to objects of possible experience; that is to the world of sense.”³² In these illustrations of the epistemic fallacy, however, I find neither Ayer nor Kant supposing that things are the way they are simply because of how we experience or think them to be. Rather, in both examples, the philosophers are asserting something about the process and limitation of knowing and meaning, not about the nature of reality as dependent on or formed by our knowing. Nevertheless for Bhaskar, one is guilty of committing the epistemic fallacy whenever one supposes that things are the way they are because of how we think about them or come to know

²⁹Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science*, 48.

³⁰Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science*, 17.

³¹Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science*, 16.

³²Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science*, 37. See A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth Logic* (New York: Dover Publications, 1952), 33-45; and Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1965), B.724.

them. Bhaskar's aim in exposing the epistemic fallacy is to establish that the structures and ways of acting of things (intransitive objects) exist and act independently of thought.³³

Being guilty of the epistemic fallacy is not the only inadequacy of Humean positivists and of Kantians for Bhaskar. The aim of his work *A Realist Theory of Science* is not only positive, to develop an ontology adequate to the reality of science; it is also negative in that he wishes to overturn the empiricist realism that has dominated the sciences since Hume. He wishes to dismantle positivistic principles that have skewed and unnecessarily restricted the pursuit of science. Bhaskar argues for intransitive causal laws that are enduring features of real mechanisms in place of Hume's observable, constant conjunction of events, which tie causal laws to closed systems. To establish open systems, Bhaskar conceives of causal laws as universal and non-empirical, that is, as intransitive. This move grounds the conception of a "natural necessity" that is independent of human activity. The affirmation of open systems and intransitive causal laws establish a realism that is opposed to positivistic mechanistic determinism and materialist reductionism.³⁴

In his metaphysical system Bhaskar attempts to synthesize two trends in the philosophy of science that challenge positivistic principles. The first trend, represented by such thinkers as Kuhn, Popper, Feyerabend, Toulmin, and Polanyi, emphasizes the social nature of science, and focuses on scientific change (revision) and development. The second trend, represented by such thinkers as Scriven, Hanson, Hesse, and Harré, emphasizes explanation and prediction, and focuses on the role played by models in scientific thought. Bhaskar reports that his new synthesis has been hailed (by his colleague Harré) as a "Copernican Revolution" in the philosophy of science.³⁵ Accordingly, he considers his philosophic position to be not just critical of past philosophies but actually revolutionary, and he names his brand of realism "transcendental realism." He considers his transcendental realism not only to be the overthrow of empiricist, positivist realism, but also to be the dialectical answer to Kantian transcendental idealism.

Kant famously was challenged by Hume's argument against our experience of causality, but he was not content to settle for Hume's skepticism,

³³Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science*, 250.

³⁴On the question of human freedom, see Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science*, 112, 117; on reductionism, see 115-116.

³⁵Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science*, 9.

in part because of his admiration for the advances of modern science. So, he wrote the *Critique of Pure Reason* in order to answer the question: What are the necessary conditions for the possibility of our knowledge of experience? In other words, what must the human mind be like in order for us to have knowledge? Bhaskar, arguably even more enamored with the advances of science, asks the question: What must the world be like for science to be possible?³⁶ He calls this question "transcendental"; however, the question merely masquerades as transcendental inasmuch as it copies the structure of Kant's basic question. Kant's definition of the "transcendental" belies Bhaskar's characterization of his question as transcendental. Kant writes:

I entitle *transcendental* all knowledge which is occupied not so much with objects as with the mode of our knowledge of objects in so far as this mode of knowledge is to be possible *a priori*.³⁷

As we have seen above, Bhaskar's realism insists on focusing on the metaphysical objects he has conceived, on the intransitive, enduring, independently real mechanisms and structures, and adamantly not on prior epistemological questions of how the mind constitutes such objects. Bhaskar's realism is not transcendental but dogmatic, even though he explicitly denies that his approach is dogmatic. He explains:

Moreover, the transcendental realist argues, this is not just a dogmatic metaphysical belief; but rather a philosophical position presupposed by key aspects of the social activity of science, whose intelligibility the transcendental idealist cannot thus, any more than the empiricist, sustain.³⁸

However, Kant defines dogmatism as:

The presumption that it is possible to make progress with pure knowledge, according to principles, from concepts alone . . . and that it is possible to do this without having first investigated in what way and by what right reason has come into possession of these concepts.

³⁶Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science*, 23.

³⁷Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A.11-12, 59.

³⁸Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science*, 26.

Dogmatism is thus the dogmatic procedure of pure reason, without previous criticism of its own powers.³⁹

Bhaskar would be considered dogmatic in this Kantian sense because he has not investigated how he arrived at the key metaphysical concepts of his system nor has he provided a criticism of his own cognitive operations. After all, he would risk committing the "epistemological fallacy" if he grounded his metaphysics in any cognitive analysis. Rather, he simply appeals to given facts about the social activity of science as the ground of his metaphysical concepts and judgments of reality. In answer to his own so-called "transcendental" question, Bhaskar writes: "given that science does or could occur, the world *must* be a certain way."⁴⁰ In light of the basic definitions of the thinker whose transcendental idealism, he seeks to surpass, it can be concluded that Bhaskar's realism is the opposite of transcendental. Rather than concern himself with the mode of our knowing of objects, he focuses on objects as they are. Further, Bhaskar's realism is thoroughly dogmatic, because it does not examine how it arrives at its basic concepts; it simply asserts them.

Bhaskar considers his philosophy to be revolutionary, a kind of Copernican Revolution. Although he does not mention Kant when he accepts this sobriquet, he must be aware, given repeated references to Kant throughout his book, of Kant's famous metaphor of the Second Copernican Revolution. The first Copernican Revolution was Copernicus's novel idea of the heliocentric model of the solar system. He was not able to make mathematical sense of the movement of the planets on the traditional assumption that the earth was the center of planetary motion. But, when he reversed the picture, and supposed the sun to be the center, it all made sense. The result was the displacement of man and of our planet from the center of the universe. Kant's Second Copernican Revolution reversed the first, by placing man (the human mind) again at the center of the universe (the world). Kant explains:

A similar experience can be tried in metaphysics, as regards the *intuition* of objects. If intuition must conform to the constitution of the objects, I do not see how we could know anything of the latter *a priori*; but if

³⁹Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B. xxxv, 32.

⁴⁰Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science*, 29.

the objects (as object of the senses) must conform to the constitution of our faculty of intuition, I have no difficulty in conceiving such a possibility.⁴¹

Kant's Second Copernican Revolution is to have the objects of experience conform to our concepts, rather than the concepts conform to the objects. Bhaskar's Copernican Revolution is not a revolution; it is a reversion to the Copernican, pre-Kantian worldview. He begins with objects, intransitive mechanisms, and structures, which are dogmatically posited as really existing regardless of human knowing, and then molds our minds to conform to the conceived reality.⁴² Thus, Bhaskar's realism is non-transcendental, dogmatic, and pre-Kantian.

Further the realism of Bhaskar is naïve. Kant's Second Copernican Revolution cemented Descartes's turn to the subject by placing the starting point of philosophy in the human mind and by conceiving of objects as constituted in part by the a priori structures of the mind. Descartes's turn to the *cogito* as the foundation of all of philosophical and scientific knowledge marked the birth of modern philosophy, and the shift from naïve to critical philosophy. "Naïve" in this context does not mean innocent, ignorant, or uneducated. It means to presuppose facts and realities without prior examination for their ground. "Critical," in contrast, means to methodically uncover and examine one's presuppositions. A critical realism, then, can be neither naïve nor dogmatic. Perhaps Bhaskar is using the term "critical" with a more commonsense meaning. He makes clear that his objective is to critique positivistic realism, and so he may mean that his realism is critical because it criticizes this prior but still influential form of realism. But, in this sense the philosophy of Anaximander would be critical, because he was critical of Thales's monism. And, Thomas Aquinas would be a critical thinker, because he argued against Averroës. However, classical thought no matter the level of genius is naïve in contrast to the critical philosophies ushered in by Descartes.

LONERGAN'S CRITICAL REALISM

Lonerган advances a critical realism that is transcendental, post-Kantian as well as post-Hegelian, not dogmatic and not naïve. Lonergan's explains

⁴¹Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B.xvii, 22.

⁴²Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 94.

how his procedure of intentionality analysis is one:

(1) beginning with a phenomenology of coming to know as a series of acts and (2) using that as a basis for an epistemology that explains why such acts constitute knowledge, and (3) concluding with a metaphysics of proportionate being that is critical in the sense that its terms and relations have their empirical counterpart in the experienced terms and experienced relations of cognitional theory.⁴³

Lonergan characterized his philosophic position here as critical in that it is grounded in an intentionality analysis, a phenomenology of cognitional operations, and in an epistemology that is verified in the data of consciousness. In this sense, it is also transcendental and non-dogmatic, according to Kant's definitions.

In the introduction to *Insight* Lonergan describes the duality in our knowing. There is an animal knowing that is extroverted, oriented toward the "already out there now real." And there is human knowing that involves in addition to sensory experience the role of intelligence and reason. The problem posed by this duality does not lie in the fact of this opposition in our knowing, but in the philosophic misidentification of human knowing with merely animal knowing, or the modeling of our human knowing on animal knowing. The most obvious feature of animal knowing is looking with its requisite distance between the looker and the looked at, the subject and the object. The failure to clearly distinguish between these two kinds of knowing places a philosopher in a dilemma. Either one is tempted to identify knowing with the sense experience and to deny any role for understanding, or one is tempted to identify knowing with understanding alone and to entrap oneself in immanentism, relinquishing the possibility of objective knowing. Lonergan concludes:

From the horns of that dilemma one escapes only through the discovery – and one has not made it yet if one has no clear memory of its startling strangeness – that there are two quite different realisms, that there is an incoherent realism, half animal and half human, that poses

⁴³Bernard Lonergan, "Horizons and Transpositions," in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, vol. 17 of the *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Robert C. Croken and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 429.

as a halfway house between materialism and idealism, and on the other hand that there is an intelligent and reasonable realism between which and materialism the halfway house is idealism.⁴⁴

In this passage Lonergan orders the various philosophic positions in a hierarchy. In order of ascendancy, he distinguishes materialism, naïve realism, idealism, and critical realism. Materialism and naïve realism are both empiricist and realist, but the latter is "half human" inasmuch as it recognizes a role for intelligence and rational reflection in coming to know. Materialism corresponds to the positivist Humean empiricism that Bhaskar critiques and sets about supplanting with his "transcendental" or "critical" realism. But, as has become clear, the realism of Bhaskar and Smith, while critical of positivist realism, remains a naïve realism. Another example of naïve realism, which is more sophisticated than mere materialism, is the position of Étienne Gilson, whose Scholastic realism while unabashedly dogmatic, affirms a role of intellectual vision in coming to know the real. His wholesale rejection of the Kantian critique of intellectual *Anschauung* is based on the self-evident fact of our perception of the real.⁴⁵ In comparison, Bhaskar's naïve realism is critical of positivist realism, but it does not differentiate itself from the latter on the basis of a more refined cognitional theory or epistemology. In fact, it skirts epistemological questions. Bhaskar's realism is based on the insistence that the real is already out there independent of our knowing or our being, because the activity of science presupposes reality. And unlike Gilson, rather than critically engage Kant's transcendental account of human understanding, Bhaskar recommends to transcendental idealists that they can get beyond "imagination" by taking up empirical scientific testing.⁴⁶ It seems here that Bhaskar interprets the a priori structures of the human mind not as constitutive of our experience of the world, but as just a realm of imagination. Bhaskar's naïve realism, similarly to Gilson's, serves as a halfway house between positivist empiricism and idealism. Idealism, in turn, stands as a halfway house between positivist empiricism (materialism) and Lonergan's critical realism. For Lonergan, one cannot be a critical realist without passing through idealism. This does not mean simply

⁴⁴*Insight*, 22.

⁴⁵See Paul St. Amour's "Lonergan and Gilson on the Problem of Critical Realism," *The Thomist* 69 (2005): 557-92.

⁴⁶Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science*, 15-16.

considering or understanding the viewpoint of the transcendental idealist. Critical realism requires that one is post-idealist, that one has understood and affirmed the constitutive nature of understanding and reason, that one no longer believes that facts are given and that the real is already out there. It should be noted that while post-idealist, Lonergan is also critical of Kant's residual empiricism. Further, while he sees Hegel's absolute idealism to be an advance over Kantian empiricism, a-historical, static idealism, he is also critical of Hegel's conceptualist, closed, necessitarian, and immanentist philosophy.

It is the lingering empiricist presuppositions in the realism of Bhaskar, and of Smith to the extent that Smith appropriates Bhaskar's brand of realism for his critical realist personalism, that renders it counterpositional. As outlined above, the position for Lonergan consists of three tenets: that the real is the concrete universe of being, not a subdivision of the "already out there now"; that self-knowledge is possible through intelligent and reasonable affirmation; and that objectivity is understood to be a function of intelligent inquiry and rational reflection, not a function of animal extroversion.⁴⁷ In relation to the first tenet regarding reality and how we come to know reality, Bhaskar's view is somewhat positional. Even though he avoids for the most part any cognitional or epistemological analysis, a central element of Bhaskar's philosophy of science is the social activity of science as producing knowledge. He describes drawing on "knowledge materials," by which he means experimentation, revision, development, and the accumulated body of scientific knowledge. So, he does conceive of scientific activity as involving more than passively receiving sense data. Although he speaks of facts as if they are given, his realism implies a role for human intelligence and reason in coming to know reality. Bhaskar does not treat the real as a subdivision of the empirical; rather he treats the empirical as a subdivision of the real. Regarding the second tenet of the position, Bhaskar does not deal with the issue of self-knowledge, except briefly and indirectly, when he includes the human mind as a part of reality.

In relation to the third tenet of Lonergan's position, Bhaskar's philosophy is most evidently counterpositional in his empiricist notion of objectivity. He posits reality as enduring independently of human knowing or of the existence of human beings at all, and he formulates the epistemic fallacy

⁴⁷*Insight*, 413.

that rules out any role for epistemological issues in structuring the nature of objective reality. Smith, as quoted above, articulates the aim of science and reveals the implicit notion of objectivity at work in Bhaskar's brand of realism; "The point of science, then, is to conform the shape of our minds to the nature of reality that exists beyond (but also including) our minds." As has been argued above, the project of conforming the mind to reality rather than understanding reality as constituted by the mind is uncritical, naïve, pre-Kantian. This is not to deny that there is an isomorphism between the structure of the mind and the structure of reality. But for Lonergan, one arrives at this isomorphism through critical transcendental method, not through assertion. In addition, to say that science (scientific knowledge) requires a reality that is completely independent of the subject is to imply that objectivity can only be attained by bypassing the human mind. Of course, scientists are involved in producing scientific knowledge, but objective reality is to remain untouched and untainted by subjectivity. Lonergan speaks of this kind of neglect of the subject, which is also symptomatic of some Scholastic theology: "They seem to have thought of truth as so objective as to get along without minds."⁴⁸ Bhaskar's and Smith's implicit notion of objectivity is empiricist, because it imagines that there must be a distance between the subject and the object. This required distance is a function of the extroversion of animal knowing, the mistaken belief that knowing is something like looking at an object over there. Lonergan affirms, on the contrary, "objectivity is simply the consequence of authentic subjectivity."⁴⁹

CONCLUSION

There is a lacuna in Bhaskar's and Smith's accounts of their positions; they both fail to distinguish two possible starting points in scientific procedure – starting with the way things are in reality or starting with the way we come to know things. This classical distinction is originally found in Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* I, 13 where he illustrates the difference in scientific reasoning of either beginning with the sphericity of the moon and deducing its phases, or beginning with the phases of the moon to arrive at its sphericity.⁵⁰ He makes the distinction more clearly in *Physics*, I, 1:

⁴⁸Bernard Lonergan, *The Subject* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1968), 5.

⁴⁹Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 265.

⁵⁰Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, trans. G. R. G. Mure, *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard

"The natural way of doing things is to start from the things which are more knowable and obvious to us and proceed towards those which are clearer and more knowable by nature."⁵¹ Lonergan in numerous places in his works writes of this difference between what is knowable without qualification, the cause of being (the *causa essendi*) and what is knowable relatively to us, the cause of knowing (the *causa cognoscendi*). In discussing the starting point of philosophy, Lonergan says that one could either start with being or reality and then eventually develop an account of knowing as does the Scholastic tradition for the most part, or one could begin with what is first for us, as Aristotle advises in the *Physics*, which for Lonergan is cognitional process.⁵² Lonergan allows that a whole, coherent philosophy could be developed beginning with either starting point, but he opts to start with his transcendental method of intentionality analysis. For to start with reality is to engage in naïve, dogmatic philosophy, but to start with the subject, to begin with a "phenomenology of coming to know as a series of acts," is to engage in a philosophy that is critical.⁵³

McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), I.13.17b, 129-30.

⁵¹Aristotle, *Physics*, trans. R. P. Hardie and R. K. Gaye, *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, I.1.184a, 218.

⁵²"Horizons and Transpositions," 428.

⁵³"Horizons and Transpositions," 429.

EPISTEMOLOGY AND THE PERSON

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THE TITLE “EPISTEMOLOGY and the Person” may seem for many seem for many philosophical readers to be an oxymoron. And, certainly, if this essay is a review of Christian Smith’s *What Is a Person?*, then such a description may seem warranted since Smith, in a powerful critique, shows how the “epistemological turn” in modern thought has had a devastating effect on the ability of social science to treat in a serious manner the reality of the person. What is needed, Smith argues, is a “metaphysical turn” to replace the “epistemological turn,” a frank acknowledgment, though in a critical manner, of the existence of a real world beyond the epistemological subject, a real world that includes the reality of persons. What is needed, then, is a “critical realist” perspective.

The term “critical realism” (which Smith takes from the philosophy of Roy Bhaskar) immediately raises the prospects for those familiar with Lonergan of a genuine encounter that can perhaps be more a dialogue than a display of dialectics. It is the thesis of this paper that precisely such an encounter between Smith and Lonergan is an instance of the kind of “further collaboration” to which Lonergan famously offers an invitation at the beginning of *Insight*. For Smith employs his critical realist tools massively in the field of sociology. Lonergan, on the other hand, can provide an epistemology as an alternative to the “epistemological turn” that grounds the kind of metaphysics Smith finds necessary to correct the erroneous assumptions operative in sociological practice – Lonergan can, uniquely, make the “critical” in critical realism more critical.

WHAT SMITH OFFERS LONERGAN

Smith is an accomplished sociologist who has discerned the presence of philosophical assumptions at work explicitly, or, more often, implicitly, in various fields and approaches in sociology. These assumptions have, for the most part, led sociological analysis astray and need to be corrected, Smith maintains, by the perspective of critical realism. Philosophical assumptions therefore are not extrinsic to sociological practice; they are embedded in the very enterprise of sociology. The point – against all positivist prejudices – is to get the philosophical assumptions right to do sociology well. Smith mentions Lonergan in a long footnote listing critical realist thinkers, but there is no discussion of Lonergan. It should be obvious to a scholar of Lonergan studies that in his five-hundred page book, Smith is an expert practitioner familiar with the major thinkers, major books, and major articles in the relevant fields. His erudition is matched by analytic precision in framing the philosophical issues and in developing a consistent philosophical theme. The student of Lonergan can, then, find in Smith's book an excellent resource of contemporary thinking in sociology and an acute dialectical analysis of the main philosophical controversies.

Two Counterpositions: Reductionism and (Strong) Constructionism

Smith locates two prominent counterpositions.

The first set of assumptions is the positivist reductionist model, still arguably the most pervasive one, rooted in the nineteenth century, and, ultimately Enlightenment, origins of sociology from Comte to Durkheim. This model would have sociologists reduce variables to the "simplest" and "most basic" ones, thereby denying the complex stratified nature of society and of the person; seek "covering laws" to explain all phenomena much as Newton's Universal Law of Gravitation explains all motions of bodies; and find the "covering laws" in empirical regularities – that is, correlations of observations – or, in a concession to the complexity of social phenomena, in statistical correlations. The emphasis here, then, is on empirical observations or quantification to guarantee scientific validity to the "laws of society."

Smith's analysis is much more nuanced than these points suggest. He shows in a wide variety of cases how these ideas inform, often behind the scenes, the researches and the theories of sociologists and how these ideas

can insinuate themselves into often competing and even contradictory theories. Smith demonstrates the inevitable consequence of this model: social reality is truncated to fit into the methodological dictates of positivist empiricism, collapsing the complex strata of social reality to the kinds of variables susceptible to the rigors of this kind of method. Most particularly obliterated is the causal agency of persons and the socially constitutive nature and ontological integrity of acts of intelligence, moral will, and loving commitment. The positivist approach can, on one extreme, reduce persons to "social atoms" following deterministic laws of self-interest, or, in a reaction to the former "classic" analysis, reduce persons to the mechanism of social relations that subsume and define the individuals within the network. Smith mentions a sociologist of the latter school, Bruce Mayhew, who sees humans as nothing but 'biological machines' and boldly proclaims the positivist credo that "takes human society – human social organization – to be studied in exactly the same fashion as any natural science studies any natural phenomena."

While positivism, in its various guises, has been given robust, and even devastating, criticism since the nineteenth century culminating in the revolt against "modernity" by existentialists and postmodernists, Smith's critique is particularly helpful to Lonergan scholars since he provides abundant and specific evidence of the persistence and pervasive influence of this counterposition in sociology. Perhaps its sway is most disturbing in the demands of research to establish empirical regularities. This almost becomes a fetish in the drive for statistical correlations as the measure of genuine scientific legitimacy. Smith assembles an array of impressive arguments, for example, that expose the problems when this methodology usurps variables sociology (problems with establishing any substantive causal link to statistical association of variables, problems with inductive generalizations that must come to grips with the inevitable influence of contextual factors, problems with a conflict between the data actually available and the variables actually under scrutiny, problems with confusing the strength of association of the variables with the size of the database, and problems of isolating the variables for "control").

The second model, often spearheaded by postmodernism, proclaims a "strong" social constructivism.

This view goes beyond the pioneering work of Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (which Smith applauds for its phenomenological

insight, although he cautions that it has nihilist moments from the sprinkled influence of Sartrean existentialism). As Smith points out, the subtitle of Berger and Luckmann's book, *A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, indicates that the text makes no claims in epistemology or metaphysics; rather it explores the social influences on human beliefs and subjective perceptions of reality – not on actual “knowledge” of “reality” itself. Unfortunately many sociologists go beyond the self-imposed limits of Berger and Luckmann and use the idea of social construction as a springboard for bold epistemological and metaphysical counterpositions.

Social constructionism in its pronounced, strong form would maintain that much of human social life is not a product of nature, not a fixed order, but rather a “variable artifact,” the result of human *cultural* creation through social definition, interaction, and institutionalization. Moreover, not only is human social reality so constituted, but also *reality itself is a social construction*. Human mental categories, linguistic practices (if not the structure of language itself), and symbolic exchanges take on the definition of reality through ongoing social interaction. Postmodernists can add the spice that these interactions are “shaped” decisively by interests and perspectives usually reflecting an imbalance of power. Thus there are radical limits to human knowledge: we can never surpass our socially constructed limits to look at some reality-in-itself. Smith correctly sees the influence of Kantian transcendental idealism here, in which there is added a sociological *a priori* to the constituting of “knowledge.” We can add that since the social factors can be subject to the vagaries of historical contingency, transcendental idealism can morph into radical subjective idealism and historicism. Or much like the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics, where “reality” has no meaning outside of the experimental situation, the strong social constructivist counterposition could adopt a completely relativistic view, in which “reality” has no meaning beyond the construction of a particular culture at a particular time.

This brief summary cannot do justice to the extraordinarily detailed account Smith gives of the major thinkers and corresponding theoretical types involved in strong social constructionism and his impressive array of arguments against strong social constructivism, most often involving identifying some kind of performative contradiction. While the performative contradiction in this extreme form of relativism has been well noted by many sociologists, not to mention philosophers from Plato to Habermas, Smith

points out that these "fringe" views have, in fact, shaped the perspectives and thoughts and researches that operate within the orbit of strong social constructivism. These views, in turn, have radiated great influence on academic life in general and its rhetoric, operating behind the scenes as unacknowledged dogmas.

It should be clear that positivist empiricism and strong social constructionism have acted as dialectic twins, mutually supporting each other as they prey on the obvious weaknesses of the other party, all the while leading scientific culture to ever lesser viewpoints and more fragmented perspectives on the human person.

Three Theoretical Resources

Smith can criticize these counterpositions because he operates with a triad of theoretical resources, defining his position.

The first theoretical resource – and indeed the key one – is critical realism. This is the actual term for the philosophy of Roy Bhaskar. This philosophy of critical realism offers a "third way" as an alternative to positivist reductionism and postmodernist hermeneutics, which have created the intellectual dead end that Smiths finds as the deadlock in the social sciences. The starting point of critical realism is that the "epistemological turn" of modernity has led to the deadlock. Thus critical realism does an end run on epistemology and starts out with ontology: the "real" is a meaningful term. It is not coterminous with the empirical. We not only experience, we inquire; we understand; we try to frame our best case; we revise. While we are fallible in our process of inquiry, we are oriented to what is real. So, as a kind of ontological deduction that adds the "critical" to critical realism, this philosophy proclaims that we can learn about the real in a fallible, revisable manner by commitment to the process of inquiry. Another ontological deduction of critical realism is that reality is *stratified*: it exists on multiple layers, in which each layer, though connected to the others, operates with its own "characteristic dynamics and processes." In fact, there are higher layers that emerge out of the lower layers, are conditioned by them, but have their own laws. Hence critical realism, against any reductionist tendencies, is a philosophy of emerging reality, including the emergence of such a nonmaterial reality as that of the human mind with its hermeneutical tasks.

Smith applies this notion of emergence through an incredibly nuanced analysis of the emergence of higher layers of organization from unconscious being, to primary experience capacities, to secondary experience capacities, to creative capacities, to moral and interpersonal capacities – in short, to the emergence of the person. The second theoretical resource, therefore, is personalism, the twentieth-century movement associated with certain varieties of existential phenomenology and Catholic thought, reflecting what Lonergan calls the “turn to the realm of interiority.” The notion of emergence, then, in critical realism, with its nonreductionist, nonrelativistic approach to the person, joins personalism.

The critical realist commitment to fallibilistic knowledge of the real and its consonance with personalism as a result of its notion of emergence leads it to embrace a third theoretical resource – “antiscientistic phenomenology.” By this term Smith refers not so much to existential phenomenology as to Michael Polanyi and Charles Taylor. The critical realist, that is, non-naïve realist, approach to knowledge emphasizing its fallibilism but, at the same time, its goal of understanding the real, is also emphasizing the role of personal commitment and fidelity in the process of inquiry – exactly the point Polanyi makes in his celebrated work on personal knowledge. This emphasis dovetails, too, with Charles Taylor’s contention that we must reject scientific, reductionist claims that contradict our “Best Accounts” of our conscious activities as cognitive and moral agents – our “phenomenological” experience. Our Best Accounts, Smith says, are arrived at “by challenge, discussion, argumentation, reflection, criticism, vetting, that is, by testing against the clarity of experience, including through systematic observation and the discipline of reason.” Experience here is not restricted to the data of senses but focuses on the data of consciousness.

The Person

Based on these theoretical resources, Smith argues for the validity of the notion of the person, so conceived, in sociology. What, then, is the person? Smith defines the person thusly:

[A] conscious, reflective embodied, self-transcending center of subjective experience, durable entity, moral commitment, and social communication who – as the efficient cause of his or her own responsible

actions and interactions – exercises complex capacities for agency and intersubjectivity in order to sustain his or her own incommunicable self in loving relationships with other personal selves and with the nonpersonal world. (Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 74)

The person is not a social atom but a being inherently related to other persons; the person is not, on the other hand, a creation of society, a mere function of a mammoth social network. The person is a causal agent who constitutes social reality, even as social reality has its own stability and endurance, which conditions the life of the persons within it. Person and society are in a complicated dialectic relationship. Sociology, by giving a nuanced account of the person, who operates on multiple layers and in dialectical relation to society, can in giving such a nuanced account of the “facts” of the person, offer these “facts” to ethics as evidence for reflection on either human – and social – flourishing or human – and social – brokenness. And in the context of such an ethics, sociology can make its contribution in exploring the question of human dignity. Hence Smith’s critical realism can ground a critical moral theory along the lines of Habermas, and, as we shall see, of Lonergan.

WHAT LONERGAN OFFERS SMITH

Our brief account here by no means can do justice to the richness and erudition of Smith’s remarkable work. We have focused on his methodological assumptions. But this is quite appropriate if we are to engage him in a dialogue with Lonergan.

What, then, can Lonergan’s critical realism offer to Smith’s critical realism?

Parallel Claims

It should be obvious to any student of Lonergan that there are huge areas of comparison between Lonergan and Smith.

First, Lonergan, of course, rejects out of hand the counterpositions that Smith sees as still holding sway over sociology – scientism, reductionism, positivism, empiricism, subjective idealism, hermeneutical relativism, and linguistic historicism. Lonergan, however, refutes these counterpositions

neither primarily by metaphysical deductions nor by ad hoc arguments revealing their contradictions. He carries on a broad and comprehensive frontal assault. He does so by taking on in *Insight* the most formable thinker of the "epistemological turn" of modernity, namely, Kant. Lonergan's critique of Kant (and of related counterpositions) establishes his distinct alternative to the "epistemological turn." More on this later.

Second, Lonergan's notion of "emergent probability" is clearly consonant with the idea of emerging stratified realities. "Higher integrations" can emerge, both conditioned by lower manifolds but organizing those manifolds according to its own laws. Lonergan's account of emergent probability is brilliant, metaphysically comprehensive, and supported by vast amounts of scientific data. It is a resource that could hold promise for fruitful dialogue. The universe, in Lonergan's view, is a directed but open dynamism in which the effectively probable realization of its own possibilities means the emergence of new forms and new, more complex realities. This involves a transformation of universal explanatory patterns immanent in the data, or "conjugate forms." In Lonergan's universe, one set of conjugate forms can give place to another. The result: the emergence of new forms. Lonergan argues for a universe that is not only emergent but emergent according to probability schedules. The intelligible principles of natural processes are most often "schemes of recurrence," in which, in a given series of events, "the fulfilment of the conditions of each would be the occurrence of the others" – as, for example, the planetary system, the nitrogen cycle, and the routines of animal life. Lonergan, however, can also find an intelligibility by abstracting from nonsystematic processes and discerning the ideal frequency from which actual, relative frequencies do not diverge systematically. We can thus combine the intelligibility of statistical laws to the notion of a conditioned series of schemes of recurrence. When the emergence of an actual order at one level (for example, the organic) is the precondition, that is, potency, for the emergence of a higher level order (for example, the psychic), and when the latter is the precondition for a still higher order (for example, the intellectual), we have a conditioned series of schemes of recurrence. And, given sufficient numbers and time, the higher orders will be likely to emerge. What on one level is merely a random manifold of events can on another, higher level be an actually functioning formal pattern of events. In other words, an emergent higher integration systematizes what was merely coincidental on a lower order. Moreover,

such a dynamic integration systematizes by adding and modifying until the old integration is eliminated and, by the principle of emergence, a new integration is introduced. The higher integrations always exist as "things," concrete "unity, identity, wholes," with their concrete intelligibilities. Such a "thing" that is a "person" will be a complex of concrete higher integrations (such as depicted in Smith's diagram on page 74 of his text). Lonergan's notion of emergent probability is grounded in his metaphysical principle of the isomorphism of the structure of knowing and the structure of the known. Here again we need to stress this relation to epistemology.

Third, Smith's complex analysis of the person can be met almost point by point in Lonergan's thinking. For Lonergan, the person is embodied, both intelligible and intelligent, both matter and spirit. "Genuineness," in fact, demands negotiation between the higher order of intelligence and the lower manifold of the psyche and of the organic. Lonergan's treatment of the psyche and of neural demand functions can indeed shed some light on Smith's contention that much of social norms operate on the level of the body as "scripted" bodily routines, rituals, and expressions. Here, too, Lonergan's notions of elemental meanings, intersubjective spontaneity, symbols, and incarnate meaning would add explanatory power. Lonergan, of course, has a precise, comprehensive, explanatory account of cognitive and moral operations – indeed moving through different and distinct levels of operation. Lonergan sees these operations (and their underpinning intentionality) as ultimately going beyond themselves into the state of loving, which embraces what Smith calls, as the highest level of emergence for the person, "inter-personal commitment and love." The heart of Lonergan's treatment of the person is found in his notion of "personal values," ranking above vital values, social values, and cultural values on the preference scale of what is worthwhile – based on the criterion of self-transcendence. Personal values cannot be sustained without the gift of spiritual values. As personal operations become social cooperations – in the kind of causal agency Smith identifies with the persona – they set up the structure of the human good.

Fourth, Lonergan sees a definitely dialectical relation between subject and society. Human cognitive and moral agents through common experience, common understanding, common judgments, and common commitments, constitute cultural communities that inform a way of life which becomes common social cooperations; these are objectified, embodied, and institutionalized only to carry on their own existence and,

in turn, through acculturation, socialization, and education have massive influence on the growth and development of persons. So persons constitute society, and society constitutes persons.

Fifth, Lonergan sees inauthenticity as well as authenticity in human life and human society. He observes how inattentiveness, stupidity, irrationality, and irresponsibility joined with various biases (neurotic, egotistical, group, and general commonsensical) can lead not only to brokenness and breakdown but to a cumulative cycle of decline affecting all aspects of human existence including the culture. Lonergan in one of his more passionate appeals urges social science not only to be descriptive and not only to be explanatory but also to be normative:

[S]o also human science has to be critical. It can afford to drop the nineteenth-century scientific outlook of mechanist determinism in favor of an emergent probability. It can profit by the distinction between the intelligible emergent probability of prehuman process and the intelligent emergent probability that arises in the measure that man succeeds in understanding itself and in implementing that understanding. Finally, it can be of inestimable value in aiding man to understand himself and guiding him in implementation of that understanding if, and only if, it can learn to distinguish between progress and decline. In other words, human science cannot be merely empirical; it has to be critical; to reach a critical standpoint, it has to be normative. This is a tall order for human science as hitherto it has existed. But people looking for easy tasks best renounce any ambition to be scientists; and if mathematicians and physicists can surmount their surds, the human scientist can learn to master his. (*Insight*, 261)

This means that sociology, in principle, ought to contribute to the differentiation of practices, routines, and cycles of progress from the practices, routines, and cycles of decline. The task is enormous, difficult, and complex. It requires a sophisticated grasp of the nature of human understanding and its various patterns as well as an equally sophisticated grasp of the nature and forms of the flight from understanding. This requires a sophisticated epistemology.

Epistemology and Method in Metaphysics

To be sure, much more could be said on these topics. These parallels between Lonergan and Smith deserve extensive treatment. And we could anticipate that out of the dialogue would come new insights that would take us beyond just an affirmation of the parallels. As fruitful as that exercise may be, what Lonergan offers most to Smith and to his type of critical realism is something else – method.

Smith has legitimately sought to extricate himself from the epistemological morass of modernity. Cartesian rationalism was but another version of medieval conceptualism and essentialism, which falsely promised a kind of mental picture of reality; empiricism was ultimately but another version of the medieval *via moderna* tending toward nominalism. Kant's cancellation of rationalism and empiricism sought to limit human knowledge to the phenomenal world through the imposition of a priori categories. The idealist attempt to ground a metaphysics in the dynamism of the categories led to the revolt against idealism, ushering in the twentieth century with its ever lesser viewpoints of positivism versus existentialism and later postmodernism. Amid all the complicated movements and counter movements Lonergan sees one dominant epistemological assumption shape all the debates, namely, knowing in order to be knowing of reality has to be something at least analogous to seeing. So Lonergan, too, would reject the epistemological turn.

But in its place he would resort to an extensive and comprehensive phenomenology of the cognitive and moral operations that would provide the data for a cognitional theory, which would, in turn, be the basis for a precise explanatory account of the cognitive operations, each related to each other as part of the emergent self-transcending structure of inquiry with its unfolding levels of experiencing, understanding, and judging. Lonergan expands his enterprise in post-*Insight* writings to include a phenomenological account of moral inquiry, where questions go beyond those of fact to those of value and decision. A brief summary of his expanded cognitional and moral theory of operations, such as he provides in the opening chapter of *Method in Theology*, may seem clear and even commonplace. But that can be deceptive. The entire effort is, in his words, one of "self-appropriation," and several hundred pages of *Insight* are intended as exercises in such self-appropriation. Lonergan not only details the operations of cognitive

and moral inquiry and their structural relationship; he also locates the imperative driving the process. Fidelity to the immanent, self-transcending norms of inquiry would be the road to objectivity. Reality is not something "out there" extrinsic to the process of inquiry to somehow be "seen" (for example, by empiricist sensations or by conceptualist mental perceptions). Reality is a heuristic notion: we are "related" to reality by the directional tendency of our questioning. We know reality by fidelity to the norms of inquiry, issuing in judgments. Our knowing is an ongoing process. It is a process both personal and normative, fallibilistic and objective. Since what we know is through the process of inquiry what we know is isomorphic to the structure of inquiry. We have here a legitimate and critical link between epistemology and metaphysics. Lonergan has a nuanced version of virtue epistemology. Lonergan can show that any attempt to deny the constitutive role of the cognitive operations would be to use them, thus issuing in a performative contradiction (performing, for example, the operations of experiencing, understanding, and judging to deny the constitutive role of any of the operations). This epistemology would ground a metaphysics of critical realism (with the parallels to that of Smith mentioned above). Thus Lonergan in his phenomenology of consciousness and cognitional theory, as he conceives of it, provides a non-foundationalist foundation for an alternative epistemology, which, in turn, can provide a methodical basis for handling issues in metaphysics.

Some of the most sensitive contemporary philosophers have gravitated, hesitatingly, towards metaphysics. Jürgen Habermas, following some analytic philosophers, has had to come to the startling conclusion that there must be a reality that we are seeking to know. He infers – by way of "realist intuitions" – that there is a reality transcending us, that we know something of this reality by encountering it as cognitive agents, and that our linguistic assertions refer to language-independent objects. But he is still under the spell of Kant. We must reject "representational realism" and the correspondence theory of truth, substituting for it a version of the coherence theory of truth rooted in a Kantian pragmatism with the epistemic priority of the "linguistically articulated horizon of the lifeworld." At this point, so it is evident, the problem of bridging the gap between subject and object ("out there to be seen") has made its ugly appearance. Charles Taylor seems to be under the sway of Heidegger in fearing that scientific inquiry leads to methodological control. He would replace it with our Best

Account, our reasoned attempt to explicate those experiences that truly give meaning and value to our lives and hence point to some reality. But we cannot have recourse to metaphysics; we cannot completely reverse the change in worldview that came with the Cartesian "disengaged subject" confronting the world as an object through representations of the mind and with the now post-Cartesian "engaged subject" unable to disengage from its historically embedded horizon. Indeed Taylor's hermeneutical explication seems to approximate in many ways Lonergan's notion of the norms of self-transcending inquiry. Taylor nonetheless seems hesitant to pursue the further cognitional, epistemological, and metaphysical questions that might flow from his hermeneutical explication, for to enter the metaphysical terrain would be to encounter the gap between subject and object, for which there is no bridge.

The argument here is that Lonergan leads us to a metaphysics that has critical grounds. We have already seen above how Lonergan's epistemology supports Smith's reversal of counterpositions and argues for a normative sociology that can engage ethical matters about the social good and human dignity as it discerns the difference between progress and decline. And we have seen how Lonergan's metaphysics can support the notion of emergence and stratified reality. Let us address here how Lonergan can handle in a methodical way two strategically important metaphysical issues, the nature of the person and the nature of society.

How can we meaningfully talk about the person, the person as agent, and the person as subject of human rights and dignity if we have no metaphysical view of the self? Lonergan would investigate the self metaphysically in terms of his notions of "central" potency, form, and act as they apply to a unity-identify-whole grasped in data as individual and as acting in particular spaces and times. This "thing" is a person-thing because it has "conjugate" potency, form, and acts, and the conjugate form (the intelligibility) is that of a person-thing, which is precisely the explanatory relations and unity of organic, psychic, and intellectual levels of integration. There is an operator immanent in the person-thing that propels development and makes for the emergence of higher integrations. These metaphysical explanations of the person are grounded in, and isomorphic with, the unity of consciousness as given and the experience of the dynamism of self-transcending inquiry. Lonergan, then, has precise metaphysical correlates to the dynamic structure of inquiry – explicated in cognitional theory and verified in the data of

consciousness. We see here Lonergan's bold claim that his critical realist metaphysics is verifiable.

Lonergan's metaphysics, too, sheds light on the ontological status of society. It is not a big thing in which little things (persons) function as cogs in a machine. Nor is it completely artificial. It is neither a thing nor an artifact. It is a reality that is the product of, and endures precisely as self-mediation. As we have seen, cooperations and skills of members of society create a network of relations that function as schemes of recurrence: they mediate social order. The social order through the common experience, common interpretation, common judgments, and common decisions constitute the community that sustains society as an objective order and in that capacity is a framework of mutual self-mediation as it shapes individuals through socialization, acculturation, and education. The common good is neither reducible to the sum of individual goods nor does it subsume the goods of persons in a super metaphysical essence.

Our brief foray into Lonergan's metaphysics illustrates its methodological grounding in his epistemology, which allows for verification of metaphysical claims in the data of consciousness, that is, in the conscious performance in the process of inquiry with its immanent norms. The strength of Smith's critical realism is that it is a clear alternative to the weaknesses of its main opponents, empiricism and reductionism, on the one hand, and various forms of hermeneutical idealism, on the other. Reality is greater than the object-world of sense experience; and we can know it through acts of linguistic interpretation since language does have reference outside itself. Critical realism can be seen as the mean between the extremes of passive sensation and active hermeneutical reality construction. In this sense critical realism would be a half-way house between empiricism and idealism. Lonergan would have us reconfigure the relationship with his alternative, virtue epistemology. We indeed need to explain (interpret) the data and formulate our ideas. But the exigency of the desire to know raises a further question about each of our formulations and claims, Is it so? We seek insights into what constitutes sufficient evidence to support our claims and marshal and weigh the evidence to make a rational judgment. The self-transcending process of inquiry moves us from experiencing, to understanding, and then to judging. Empiricism focuses on experiencing; idealism focuses on understanding; critical realism focuses on the entire, compound process of experiencing, understanding, and judging as underpinned by the desire to

know. Lonergan's critical realist epistemology, in turn, grounds his critical realist metaphysics. Idealism is the half-way house between empiricism and critical realism. Thus the Lonergan enterprise can provide methodological precision to justify the main metaphysical claims of Smith in his extraordinary book about the person. Lonergan offers a distinct method of linking critical realism to phenomenology and to personalism.

LIVING BEYOND OUR MEANS: THE TROUBLING GAP BETWEEN ONTOLOGY AND ADVOCACY

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"High (moral) standards need strong (moral) sources."
(Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 516)

CHRISTIAN SMITH, IN his recent book, *What Is a Person?*, openly acknowledges his important debts to Charles Taylor, particularly Taylor's study of the modern identity in *Sources of the Self*.¹ Smith's debts are plural, because he draws freely on several aspects of Taylor's thought: his phenomenology of moral experience, his critical moral realism based on the best available account principle, his ontology of holistic individualism.² This paper focuses on a common concern shared by Taylor and Smith: the troubling gap between the moral imperatives we moderns accept (advocacy), and the moral ontologies we explicitly affirm. Like Taylor, Smith believes there is a "pragmatic contradiction" between contemporary moral aspirations, unprecedented in their ambition and scope, and the increasingly narrow moral theories we offer in their defense.³ The pragmatic contradictions cited by Smith and Taylor are very similar to the "performative inconsistencies" criticized by Bernard Lonergan in his

¹Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989); Christian Smith, *What Is a Person?: Rethinking Humanity, Social Life, and the Moral Good from the Person Up* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

²See Charles Taylor's *Philosophical Arguments* for the complex notion of "holistic individualism," an ontological position Taylor traces to Wilhelm von Humboldt (*Philosophical Arguments* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995], 185).

³See Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 2-5.

dialectical challenge to philosophical counterpositions.⁴ Though the heart of this paper will be devoted to Smith and Taylor, the final section will draw on Lonergan's moral insights as well.

ADVOCACY AND ONTOLOGY IN TAYLOR'S MORAL PHILOSOPHY

In his critical study of the modern moral identity, Charles Taylor relies on three forms of argument: a phenomenology of moral experience that begins with our moral responses to the concrete situations of ordinary life; a genealogy of modern moral traditions extending from the Renaissance and Reformation through the Enlightenment and Romanticism, culminating in epiphanic Modernism and the hermeneutics of suspicion; and finally, a critical retrieval of the merits and limitations of these still influential traditions based on the inescapable moral dilemmas they have created for us and our contemporaries.⁵

Taylor's moral phenomenology establishes several key points. First, the critical distinction between our *de facto* human desires and our strong moral evaluations. The *de facto* desires as such make no normative claim. But our strong evaluations recognize a plurality of goods worthy of our allegiance, pursuit, and support.⁶ These evaluations, in turn, are based on our personal moral responses, including perceptions, feelings, intuitions, and judgments, to the full range of our practical experience. While these subjective responses are morally fundamental, they are not infallible. We can be mistaken in the strong evaluations they lead us to affirm. Still, they remain the best source of evidence for our developing moral identities and the moral theories we tacitly or explicitly espouse.

The situated subjects of these moral responses are not monological or disengaged.⁷ They belong to a life world (a *Lebenswelt*) with other persons to whom they communicate their strong evaluations and choices. They feel obliged to account for their moral beliefs and convictions, not only to themselves, but also to the significant others whose understanding,

⁴Bernard Lonergan, *Insight* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), 387-90, 429; Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1973), 18-20.

⁵See Charles Taylor, *Sources*, and *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007) and *A Catholic Modernity?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

⁶For Taylor's concept of "strong evaluations," see *Sources*, 4, 14, 20.

⁷See Taylor, *Sources*, 34-40.

appraisal, and criticism they seek. To clarify and justify their personal convictions, they appeal to an often tacit background of significance and value that makes sense of their judgments and choices and grounds them in a reality independent of themselves and their desires.

Taylor carefully distinguishes two distinct levels of the good: the "life goods" we value like freedom, benevolence, and justice and the "constitutive" goods or "moral sources" we invoke to justify their intrinsic importance and universal normative import.⁸ Taylor's critical contrast between moral advocacy and ontology reflects these distinct levels of the good. In the long, winding history of Modernity, a broad moral consensus has emerged in the West about the life goods worthy of our allegiance and support: individual liberties and rights, the high value of marriage, family, personal relationships and productive work, the reduction of suffering wherever it occurs, the active prevention of violence and death, a shared obligation across national, cultural, and religious boundaries to protect the rights and promote the well-being of all humankind. Note how the broad recognition of these life goods creates universally binding obligations to promote and secure them.⁹

Yet agreement on these life goods and the imperatives they entail coexists with profound disagreement about the moral sources (the background ontology) required to justify their unprecedented moral claims. Put bluntly, if our shared commitment to high moral standards is to be practically effective, we need an equally firm commitment to the strong moral sources that give these standards their point and their purpose. Absent that ontological commitment, we seem to be living, morally speaking, well beyond our means.¹⁰

One purpose of Taylor's moral genealogy is to explain how we arrived at this cultural impasse. As our sense of moral obligations increased, our shared agreements on moral ontology declined. More committed morally now than ever before, we appear to lack commonly persuasive reasons for being so. Given the inherent difficulty of meeting these often limitless claims, our moral situation is inherently precarious. We lack the moral resources to meet our universally acknowledged obligations.

⁸For Taylor's structural distinction between "life goods" and "constitutive goods" or "moral sources," see *Sources*, 92-98.

⁹See Taylor's *Sources*, 513-18.

¹⁰Taylor, *Sources*, 517.

Part of Taylor's strategy in the genealogy is to affirm the life goods recognized by our predecessors: individual freedom, the values of ordinary life, the commitment to justice and benevolence, a deep respect for the natural world, the importance of creativity, originality and the arts, the project of democratic self-government. Because all of these goods exist in both authentic and aberrant forms, it is crucial to articulate the salient differences between them. The stern moral critics of Modernity, Taylor's "knockers," recognize only the aberrant forms of these goods; the uncritical "boosters" make the opposite mistake. Only careful moral articulation can reveal the genuine value of these goods and the background conditions required for their achievement.¹¹

But defending these goods in their genuine forms does not prevent conflicts among them. As situated and finite moral agents, we regularly confront moral dilemmas, not only between good and bad, right and wrong, but also between legitimate goods whose exigent claims we're unable to honor.¹² These dilemmas force us to prioritize these goods in our personal lives in a manner we find difficult to justify. How do we find and strike the right balance in honoring the claims of family, friends, neighbors, strangers, and adversaries? Or between marriage, parenting, work, citizenship, leisure, artistic creation, and social and political activism? One escape from these dilemmas that Taylor refuses is to deny the legitimacy of some or all of these goods *tout court*. Another familiar path of escape is to refuse the request/demand to justify our choices, thus creating the impression that they are ultimately arbitrary, resting on no defensible rational ground.

But the dilemmas generated by moral pluralism are not confined to the conflicts of genuine life goods. The deeper dilemma is the doubtful credibility of the different moral ontologies competing for our allegiance. Looking back over the long history of ethics, there are three strong moral sources to which human beings have effectively appealed: God, conceived in quite different, even contradictory, terms (the theistic option); Nature, as understood before and after the development of the modern sciences (the naturalist option); Human beings, their specific nature, communities, history, and unique subjectivity (the humanist option). One way of telling

¹¹See Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), the "Inarticulacy Debate," 13-23.

¹²On this aspect of moral pluralism, Taylor acknowledges his concurrence with Isaiah Berlin. See *Philosophy in an Age of Pluralism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 213-14 and "La Lotta Continua," in *Ethics of Authenticity*, 70-80.

the moral story of Modernity is through the successive discrediting of these classical moral sources: the "death of God," the disenchantment of nature, the scientific reduction of the human to the explanatory categories of physics, biology, and neuroscience, and most recently "the death of the subject." Taylor acknowledges the cultural sway of these stories but finds them consistently reductive and one-dimensional. Moreover, they blithely ignore the cultural counter-movements their discrediting intentions provoked. The Romantic and ecological challenges to the scientific disenchantment of nature; a profound reaffirmation of God grounded in God's own affirmation of human well-being; a comprehensive interpretation of human existence as embodied in nature, embedded in history, striving for authenticity and longing for God and the good. Once again, Taylor insists on taking historical pluralism seriously. He does not side with Romanticism against the Enlightenment, nor with a narrow theism against individual rights and liberties, nor with the ardent defenders of imagination and the heart against the legitimate and distinct claims of reason.¹³

Just as the genuine life goods exist in authentic and aberrant forms, so do the competing moral ontologies he carefully maps and describes. Reading Taylor, we are frequently reminded of Leibniz's generous interpretive maxim: philosophers tend to be right in what they affirm and wrong in what they exclude or omit. In the comprehensive moral ontology Taylor develops and defends, a chastened theism rooted in Biblical images of God's creative and unconditional love, a multileveled ecological naturalism and an expansive humanism that recognizes the full range of human capacities and longings, all have their place. For Taylor, in his consistent commitment to wholeness and catholicity, all these coexisting moral sources are needed to account for the full range of our strong evaluations, our inevitable recognition of moral hierarchies, our legitimate and often intractable moral dilemmas and our deepest, most considered sense of the point and purpose of human life.¹⁴

¹³Taylor's nuanced acceptance of pluralism, of life goods, moral sources, and enduring moral traditions is one of his distinctive philosophical strengths; a strength clearly in view in *Sources* and *A Secular Age*.

¹⁴For Taylor's notion of "catholicity" as "universality through wholeness," see *A Catholic Modernity?*, 14.

OUR DEBT TO CHRISTIAN SMITH

The second related disjunct . . . the gap I see between the depiction of human beings in many of our social science theories and the moral and political beliefs and commitments that many social scientists embrace. Most social science scholars I know are personally committed – some passionately so – to human rights, social justice, equality, tolerance, and human emancipation. Behind these commitments stands a moral belief in the innate, inalienable dignity and value of human beings. The disconnect I see is that few of the social science theories we employ in our disciplines model human beings in ways that justify or account for these humanistic moral and political beliefs. Few representations of the human in social scientific theories make clear why such objects should be bearers of rights, equality or self-determination. (*What Is a Person?*, 3)

We humans are self-interpreting animals. An important part of who we are is who we take ourselves to be.¹⁵ Our need for deep, comprehensive self-knowledge is rooted in our constitutive desire to know reality as it truly is. But we are more than just another part of the universe of being that we seek to understand. We are intelligent knowers as well as parts of the known; we are responsible agents as well as beings affected by external causation; we are developing persons in many leveled interpersonal relationships as well as conditioned objects in a spatio-temporal-causal continuum. In striving for self-knowledge, we need to acknowledge both parts of these conjunctive assertions. Given the epistemic primacy accorded scientific and technological knowledge in our culture, we risk minimizing the importance of other ways of knowing who we are. This is especially true when the goal of scientific knowledge is reduced to the prediction and control of reality, including the complex realm of human affairs.¹⁶ The paradigms of knowing established by the natural sciences tend to discredit accounts of human existence rooted in the effort to understand and appraise our personal experience and to guide our living in a wiser, more responsible manner. The deeper point of self-knowledge is not prediction and control, but the comprehensive understanding and appraisal of who we are and of how we should live responsibly with others.

¹⁵See Taylor, *Sources*, 34; “the self is partly constituted by its self-interpretations.”

¹⁶Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 11-12.

Christian Smith is a contemporary social theorist, dedicated to his academic discipline, but troubled by the models of the person our social theories tend to promote and presume.¹⁷ Like Taylor, whose philosophical influence he acknowledges, he sharply challenges the adequacy of the natural scientific paradigm for human self-understanding. An important sign of this inadequacy is the troubling disconnect between the moral commitments of social scientists (advocacy) and the ontological theories of the human being they tacitly or explicitly affirm. There would seem to be two ways to resolve this internal conflict: sharply to limit our moral commitments to comply with our theories (ontologies), or to revise and augment our theories so they more closely align with our reflective moral aspirations. Smith, like Taylor, deliberately follows the second path. Let us now track his strategies, arguments, and substantive claims in this ambitious revisionary endeavor.

The Phenomenology of Personal Experience

We can fruitfully study human beings from several intentional perspectives: the third person perspective of science and historical scholarship; the second person perspective of interactive participants in reciprocal dialogue; the first person perspective of reflection on one's own subjective experience. A comprehensive theory of the person will require coherently integrating these distinct but complementary heuristic perspectives. But a mistaken theory of epistemic objectivity tends to discredit dialogical and phenomenological accounts of human existence. Smith follows Taylor in embracing the phenomenology of personal experience as an indispensable source of self-knowledge. What does such a phenomenological account actually reveal?¹⁸ Human beings are embodied and situated centers of conscious experience and activity. Their conscious experiences are fundamentally intentional in nature; that is they are inherently directed to objective realities independent of the subject's awareness of them. This subjective tendency to self-transcendence may occasionally fail to be realized in experience, but is a constitutive feature of our conscious intentionality.

Human beings regularly undergo change, both development and decline, while preserving their personal identities. In the course of their

¹⁷For Smith's complex allegiance to contemporary social science but dissent from prevailing theories of the person, see the introduction to *What Is a Person?*, 9-22.

¹⁸For Smith's detailed account of human capacities, see *What Is a Person?*, 42-59.

cognitive development, they become capable of redirecting their intentional focus from the larger world to which they belong to their own conscious experiences and commitments. Intentionality analysis or self-reflection proceeds by seeking to understand the full range of personal experiences by raising and answering questions about them. Though Smith tends to describe this process as directing our mental gaze upon our experiences, I believe Lonergan has shown that this is a misleading way of describing phenomenological or intentional analysis.¹⁹ Just as we learn about the environing world by questioning our perceptions of it and then answering those questions as well as we can, so we learn more about ourselves by intelligently questioning our conscious experiences rather than the intended objects or contents to which they are directed. In both cases, our answers may prove to be mistaken and revisable, for our self-knowledge as well as our knowledge of the world and others remains inherently fallible.

Critical Moral Realism

Human inquiry serves many purposes but its basic and overriding aim is to discover the comprehensive truth about reality and to apply that truth, where relevant, to our practical living. This epistemic principle applies to the natural and human sciences, historical scholarship, philosophical and theological inquiry, and to the search for self-knowledge. As Lonergan has shown, there is a generalized empirical method that unites these very different forms of inquiry.²⁰ The dynamic structure of that method begins with human experience, proceeds through intelligent questions, insights, and tentative answers, culminating provisionally in factual and evaluative judgments based on the relevant available evidence. Though this dynamic structure clearly applies to natural scientific inquiry, it allows for important variations in heuristic procedure that differ from the scientific paradigm. Taylor, Smith, and Lonergan are alert to the danger of granting that paradigm epistemic hegemony in the quest for self-knowledge. As already noted, that highly personal quest requires a phenomenology of subjective experience in its full richness and complexity. That richness includes the cognitive,

¹⁹For Lonergan's critique of introspection as a form of interior "looking," see *Insight*, 320-21.

²⁰For a compressed account of generalized empirical method, see *Method in Theology*, 4-20. For a more leisurely excursus, see Part I of *Insight*, *Insight as Activity*.

moral, political, spiritual and religious experiences of human beings. In the effort to understand our subjective complexity, we implicitly rely on what Taylor calls the "best available account principle."²¹ That is, we accept as true (or provisionally true) the best explanatory account we can construct that makes sense of the whole of our experience. And because truth is the medium through which reality is known, we accept as real whatever the best account affirms to be so.²²

Taylor's principle not only creates the desired harmony between experience and theory, but it also helps us to avoid the "pragmatic contradictions" between moral ontology and advocacy. For the best account of human affairs grants full recognition to our moral aspirations and commitments. To be specific, such an account is critically open to accepting the moral sources we need to clarify and justify the life goods we prize and the imperatives and standards we honor. While Smith's developed position deliberately leaves open the theistic option and recognizes several varieties of naturalism, his focus is on human beings as irreplaceable moral sources: their ontological emergence as unique persons, their developing causal powers and capacities, their critical dependence on natural and social causation, their inalienable dignity and worth.²³ Where the natural scientific paradigm tends to favor ontological reductions and explanatory parsimony, the best account principle supports ontological emergence and sufficient explanatory complexity.

Emergent Personalism

Smith seeks to establish persons as a primary and irreducible ontological category.²⁴ Let's begin with a brief but important background account of this critical restorative project. The early Modern conceptions of the self were of a disengaged self-determining subject, ontologically separate, and distinct from the disenchanted natural universe depicted in Newtonian physics and the historically enduring communities still loyal to the conservative

²¹Taylor, *Sources*, 58-59, 71-74. For Smith's appropriation of Taylor, see *What Is a Person?*, 106-14.

²²"Verum est medium in quo ens cognoscitur" (Truth is the medium through which reality is known). Bernard Lonergan, *Second Collection* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), 17.

²³In the introduction to *What Is a Person?*, Smith carefully articulates the scope and limits of his theoretical project.

²⁴See Smith, chap. 1, "The Emergence of Personhood," 25-89.

influence of religion, tradition, and authority.²⁵ To preserve the epistemic, moral, and political independence of the self, it was thought necessary to construe the rational ego as materially disembodied, socially disembedded, and effectively autonomous in its theoretical and practical judgments.

Beginning with Hegel in the nineteenth century, this influential model of the self was radically revised. Darwin reinserted human beings into the struggles of the natural universe; Hegel and his followers insisted on the importance of sociocultural belonging; Marx stressed the determining causal power of the forces and relations of production; Freud emphasized the causal pressures on the ego from below (the *id*) and above (the society enforcing *super-ego*). During the last hundred years as the natural and social sciences grew in sophistication and cultural influence, the vaunted freedom and dignity of the person have come under attack.²⁶ The explicit aim of this scientifically inspired critique has been to reduce the personal to the impersonal, emphasizing biological determinism from below, and social and linguistic determinism from above. If the early Modern conceptions of the person were inflated in exaggerating the self's causal independence of nature and history, the late modern theories have been markedly reductionist, deliberately undermining the free agency and responsibility of the human.

Smith's ontological loyalties belong to neither of these opposing camps. He insists on the intrinsic dignity and value of persons; he recognizes their causal dependence on material elements and processes; he grants significant causal agency to social institutions and structures; he emphasizes the temporal development of persons, their capacity to acquire and exercise new causal powers and attributes. He carefully defends an ontology of personal emergence against the formidable scientific pressures of causal reductionism.²⁷

Because human persons are embodied agents, it is important to understand their ontological relations with the material universe. Individual human beings are causally dependent on the physical parts of which they

²⁵See Taylor's critical account of disengaged subjectivity in Descartes and Locke, in *Sources*, chapters 8 and 9. For the conservative influence of the Roman Trinity (religion, tradition, and authority), see Hannah Arendt, "What Is Authority?," in *Between Past and Future* (New York: Penguin Press, 1977).

²⁶Both Taylor and Smith criticize this debunking project that extends from B. F. Skinner's *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* to Edward O. Wilson's work in sociobiology.

²⁷See Smith, chap. 1, "The Emergence of Personhood," and chap. 3, "The Reality of Social Construction."

are composed. These parts can be practically conceived in commonsense categories: bones, limbs, blood, muscles, sense organs, and so forth. But they can also be theoretically conceived in the explanatory categories of contemporary science: atoms, molecules, cells, genes, neurons, et cetera. Now ordinary common sense is not tempted to reduce the person to his or her bodily parts. Except in the case of vital organs like the heart, brain, and lungs, we don't cease to be a person by losing a limb, breaking a bone, or spilling blood. But explanatory reduction of the "higher" to the "lower" or theoretically, more basic, has been a goal of natural science since the seventeenth century. Given this heuristic orientation, why shouldn't it be possible to explain human beings fully in the classical laws of physics or the statistical laws of genetics and neuroscience? Wouldn't such an ontological reduction comply with the principle of explanatory parsimony and the heuristic commitment of the natural sciences to material and efficient causation exclusively?

For Smith, ontological emergence is the clear alternative to causal reduction.²⁸ The physical elements that compose human bodies are intelligible entities lacking in consciousness, sensibility, intelligence, rationality, and moral responsibility (among the defining capacities of persons as they develop and mature). Persons are genuinely emergent entities ontologically dependent on these composite elements and processes but not reducible to them. Emergence constitutes a recurrent event in which higher order beings arise from lower order entities, with the higher order existents having capacities and properties the lower orders lack. In the special case of personal emergence, Smith elaborates a detailed list of such properties with a particular emphasis on the human capacities for self-transcendence, free causal agency, moral and political responsibility, and interpersonal friendship, love, and communion.²⁹

Given the ontological reality of emergence, Smith insists that the whole of being, including human existence, is hierarchically structured and not metaphysically "flat."³⁰ Human persons are embodied agents, constitutively dependent on their bodies for their being and conduct, but not reducible to them. For emergent entities the ontological and causal dependence of the higher on the lower does not amount to reduction or replaceability. Three

²⁸See Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 25-42.

²⁹Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 42-75.

³⁰Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 31.

related aspects of Lonergan's thought make similar points with perhaps greater salience: the cosmology of emergent probability, the distinction between intelligible and intelligent orders of being, the explicit metaphysical retrieval of central or substantial forms to account for the unity, identity, intelligibility, and wholeness of newly emergent realities.³¹

Critical Belonging

From birth until death, human beings are situated subjects, situated in nature, in society, in history.³² They live on the earth in a humanly constructed world with other persons. These different modes of belonging play a constitutive role in their emergence, development, and flourishing. While the early Moderns like Descartes, Locke, and Kant conceived of the self as ontologically independent of natural and social causation, Smith follows Aristotle and the classical tradition in emphasizing our essentially social/political existence.³³ But does our constitutive dependence on social institutions and practices undermine our personal responsibility and freedom? Having escaped the reduction of the person to the impersonal laws of physics and biology, must we now succumb to a version of social determinism based on the "laws" of economics or some other reigning social science? If persons are essentially constituted but not determined by their natural embodiment, can the same be said truly of their sociohistorical embeddedness as well?

There are two ontological extremes to avoid in articulating the interdependence of personal and social existence. The first extreme is atomistic individualism, where humans are conceived like the classical atoms of Democritus, sufficient unto themselves with only external relations to the rest of reality.³⁴ According to the different versions of atomism, individual selves are born with the innate capacity to perceive, think, understand, communicate, judge, and decide. These specific capacities enable them to

³¹For Lonergan's cosmology of emergent probability, see *Insight*, chap. 4, "The Complementarity of Classical and Statistical Investigations"; for the ontological distinction between the material and spiritual, see *Insight*, 515-20; for the metaphysical function of central forms in constituting the unity of the person, see *Insight*, 518-20.

³²For the critical importance of "situated subjectivity and freedom," see Charles Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 154-69.

³³See Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 18, and Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*.

³⁴See Taylor's critique of political atomism in *Philosophical Papers II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1985, 187-211 and *Philosophical Arguments* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 181-89.

know, choose, act, and form voluntary associations with other persons. While the rational and volitional powers of individuals entail moral obligations to oneself, their only acknowledged social obligations are grounded in personal consent to mutually beneficial forms of social cooperation.

Ordinary language commonly allows us to speak of society, social institutions, and social dynamics. But the real meaning of these related terms is reducible to the choices and interactions of individuals ontologically independent of each other. The atomistic model of the self does not deny the existence of social relations, but it does deny their relative independence and causal autonomy. At the same time, it affirms the self-determining freedom of individuals in identifying and pursuing their interests, desires, and conceptions of personal happiness. The powerful influence of ontological atomism can be found in Bentham's Utilitarian conception of "happiness," the several *laissez-faire* versions of capitalism, the varieties of social contract theory, libertarian restrictions on legitimate government, and even in general welfare theories in which "welfare" is equated with some form of classical utility. In these still influential approaches to morality and politics, it certainly appears that a contestable social ontology closely correlates with equally contestable forms of moral and political advocacy.³⁵

The second ontological extreme is some form of social reductionism, in which social belonging allegedly undermines the free agency and responsibility of persons in their cognitive judgments, moral decisions, and spiritual allegiances. Both the Hegelian and Marxist insistence on the teleological laws of history undermines the free agency of persons. The "cunning of Reason" in Hegel, the role of economic determinism in Marx, effectively subvert the spiritual freedom of concrete individuals. These influential theories make historical necessity the true path to freedom, whether freedom is construed as the autonomy of Absolute Spirit (Hegel) or the complete emancipation of the human species in a classless society (Marx). In both cases, socio-historical belonging ostensibly conflicts with credible assertions of individual freedom and reflective detachment.³⁶

A similar pattern recurs in twentieth-century reductionist theories: the technological determinism attributed to Weber's "iron cage," the ideological

³⁵For the important role of ontology in shaping and constraining political advocacy, see Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments*, 181-86.

³⁶See Hannah Arendt's critique of Hegel and Marx's theories of historical necessity in *On Revolution* (New York: Penguin Press, 1990), 48-65.

determinism asserted by Stalinism and Nazism, the linguistic determinism claimed by some structuralist theories of language, and the legally authorized domination Foucault unmasks in the bureaucratic institutions of the contemporary West. Inflated accounts of individual autonomy on the atomist front now compete with equally inflated accounts of socio-economic and cultural determinism in the theoretical groves of academe.³⁷

Smith follows Taylor in seeking an articulated path between these ontological extremes. Both embrace ontological versions of "holistic individualism," affirming the uniqueness and expressive power of individual persons, the freedom and responsibility of personal agency, and the relative autonomy that individuals preserve within the social structures to which they belong. Both recognize the causal dependence of persons on the families into which they are born, the schools and neighborhoods in which they are educated, the economic orders in which they produce and consume, the political institutions that secure their rights, privileges, and participatory actions as citizens, the linguistic and cultural communities where they learn to communicate, to worship, to express their hopes, beliefs, and misgivings; and to achieve the reflective detachment that enables them to criticize these enabling sources of their personal development and identity. Wholeheartedly to affirm human belonging is to acknowledge the constitutive role that these social agencies play in helping us become who we are. But to affirm "critical belonging" is to insist that our intellectual, moral, and spiritual development also enable us to discern the merits and limitations of the social realities on which we depend.³⁸

Leibniz's principle applies with particular force in this deeply contested ontological quarrel. Social theorists, like philosophers and political partisans before them, tend to be right in what they affirm and wrong in what they exclude or omit. And the same can truly be said, for analogous reasons, of the public policies and plans they and we responsibly support and defend. If we are to bring greater wisdom and depth to our policy debates, we will need to articulate a more realistic and comprehensive account of the social nature and obligations of persons. To this critical communal task, Christian Smith's work makes an important contribution.

³⁷See Taylor's critique of Foucault in *Philosophical Papers II*, "Foucault on Freedom and Truth," 152-84.

³⁸For the cultural significance of "critical belonging," see Michael McCarthy, *The Political Humanism of Hannah Arendt* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2012), 243-45.

Virtues and Rules

In the contemporary West, we share a much broader consensus on life goods than we do on the moral sources needed to ground and sustain their responsible pursuit. In the terms of this paper, we live with a troubling gap between our shared moral advocacy and our fragmented allegiances to competing moral ontologies. These enduring cultural divisions have led important moral philosophers to eschew Taylor's language of the "good" and to insist on the moral primacy of the "right."³⁹ The irenic intention of this meta-ethical strategy is clear: if we're unable to agree on the constitutive goods, the moral sources, required by our strong evaluations, perhaps we can agree on a shared set of obligations and, at a higher theoretical level, on a basic principle or set of principles to resolve disputes about the scope of our personal and public duties.

This irenic strategy is designed to allow self-determining individuals to define and advance their personal conceptions of happiness, subject only to the constraints of their shared obligations. Important versions of this strategy can be found in Utilitarianism, Kantianism, and perhaps most significantly in John Rawls's magisterial theory of justice. On Rawls's account, assuming only a "thin theory" of the good and an imaginative set of contractual fictions, we can reach rational agreement on the basic principles of justice governing the fair distribution of the benefits and burdens of social cooperation.⁴⁰

As Taylor acutely observes, this influential strategy deliberately narrows the scope of traditional ethics and the prevailing range of moral disagreement. In Aristotle's moral philosophy, for example, the ethical focus is on *eudaimonia*, comprehensively defined as a whole human life rooted in the best and most inclusive virtuous activity.⁴¹ Such a life includes but is not limited to the virtue of justice, the practical virtue of voluntarily meeting our obligations to others. The moral and intellectual virtues lauded by Aristotle are modes of personal being that actualize themselves in praiseworthy knowledge, action, and passion. To live a life of *eudaimonia*, a fully virtuous life, one must become a fully virtuous person. For Aristotle, the goods of

³⁹For the reduction of ethics to morality, of eclipsing the centrality of the "good" through asserting the primacy of the "right," see Charles Taylor, *Dilemmas and Connections* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 5-15.

⁴⁰See John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971).

⁴¹Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1098a, 10-20.

human existence are hierarchically ordered, as are the specific virtues and the forms of life (*bioi*) that transcend biological survival. Aristotle defends these contestable hierarchies by grounding them in a comprehensive metaphysics in which God (*theos*), the *Kosmos*, the *polis*, and the human *psyche* are important and articulated moral sources. Because human life is complex, moral decisions often difficult, practical conflicts sure to arise and the highest standards attainable only by a few, we cannot rely on ethical rules or political laws to guide us wisely and well. Common rules and laws can reliably tell us what not to do, but they cannot teach us how to live well with others, nor how to fulfill our highest potential as intellectual and political beings.⁴²

Many contemporary moral thinkers are uneasy with Aristotle's approach because they reject the ontological claims on which it is based. To be specific, they reject his unorthodox theology, his hierarchical cosmology, his metaphysical psychology, and his restrictive account of political citizenship. Taylor, while sympathetic with Aristotle's emphasis on life goods and their justifying moral sources, doesn't agree with Aristotle's detailed account of strong evaluations and the constitutive goods invoked in their defense. Though his ethical approach is modeled on Aristotle's, their substantive disagreements are as important as these strategic similarities. Alasdair MacIntyre, in his important book, *After Virtue*, also attempts a critical retrieval of Aristotle's ethics.⁴³ MacIntyre begins his argument with a critique of Emotivism, the meta-ethical thesis that ethical statements are neither true nor false, but mere expressions of subjective or group preference. To say "X is good" is really to say "I like X and encourage you to do likewise." He claims that we live in an "emotivist age," where even those who reject the emotivist thesis conduct their discourse and practice as though it were true.⁴⁴ He further claims that one important reason we've reached this cultural impasse is that the principal modern alternatives to Aristotle's ethics, Utilitarianism and Kantianism, have shown themselves to be internally incoherent.⁴⁵ Like Taylor, MacIntyre sees the modern emphasis on ethical rules as a very poor substitute for the strong evaluations and moral

⁴²See Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 150-51.

⁴³See *After Virtue*, chap. 12, "Aristotle's Account of the Virtues."

⁴⁴For MacIntyre's critique of Emotivism, see *After Virtue*, 6-35.

⁴⁵MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 36-61.

sources (Taylor) or for a comprehensive theory of the virtues (MacIntyre) to which classical ethics was committed.

MacIntyre also agrees with Taylor that Aristotle's virtue-based ethics cannot be restored in its original form. For MacIntyre, Aristotle grounded his ethics on a natural teleology, a metaphysical biology, that no longer commands our assent.⁴⁶ Moreover, Aristotle neglected the importance of history in ethics and overemphasized the prospect of ethical harmony. But he was right to insist on the political nature of humans and their need for educational communities (*koinonia*), the household, the polis, the company of friends, in which to acquire and exercise the virtues and to achieve *eudaimonia*. But these educational communities are more differentiated and varied than Aristotle imagined. They are also historically situated, experiencing both development and decline in the course of their emergence, survival, renewal, and flourishing. Within these communities, human beings engage in social practices, like marriage, parenting, religious worship, scientific and scholarly inquiry, artistic creation, engaged and responsible citizenship. These different practices have specific standards of excellence and distinctive sets of internal goods at which they deliberately aim. They also provide important schools of virtue enabling their new members to learn the standards of excellence and to esteem the internal goods to which they are committed.⁴⁷ Just as Aristotle made acquiring and exercising the virtues essential to actualizing *eudaimonia*, the natural human *telos*, so MacIntyre made them essential to actualizing the goods internal to the different human practices. Aristotle emphasizes the complementarity of the moral and intellectual virtues and the complementarity of the intrinsic goods they empower us to actualize: bodily strength and grace, a morally excellent character rooted in courage, justice, and self-control, the intellectual excellences of art, science, practical and theoretical wisdom, the enduring goods of personal association: family loyalty, the fellowship of friends, the citizen's active commitment to the commonweal.

Like Taylor, MacIntyre is deeply sensitive to potential conflicts among these goods, to the difficulty of coordinating them gracefully in a finite human life. He emphasizes the sometimes tragic nature of human existence and the imperious demands that citizenship can make upon family loyalty (*Antigone*) or theoretical inquiry on the martial and political obligations of

⁴⁶MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 148.

⁴⁷MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 187-203.

virtuous citizens (Socrates). Special virtues are needed to mediate these conflicts and to minimize the harms they produce: personal integrity, patience, magnanimity, courage, and practical wisdom.⁴⁸ Finally, MacIntyre stresses the quest-like nature of temporal existence. Individual moral and intellectual development prepares us to seek a personal *telos*, a unique way of virtuous living, that we discover and revise in the course of pursuing it.⁴⁹ The same developing pattern applies to the most important associations to which we belong: communities of faith, inquiry, artistic creation, responsible self-government, and mutual and reciprocal love. These enabling communities change over time, for better and worse, gaining or losing clarity about the personal virtues they require to meet their internal standards of excellence and to actualize the specific goods that serve as their *raison d'être*.

Next to Taylor, MacIntyre is probably the second strongest influence on Smith's laudable attempt to bring ontology and advocacy together.⁵⁰ By defending a credible, historically sensitive theory of the virtues, Smith is able to preserve the ontological primacy of persons, to affirm and clarify the intellectual, moral, and spiritual development they strive for, to recognize their constitutive dependence on several forms of communal belonging in which they acquire the virtues and internalize the standards to which they hold themselves and others accountable. In Lonergan's terms, the virtues are both originating and terminal values. They are among the chief goods historical communities seek to cultivate in their young (terminal values), and among the sources of wisdom and sustained motivation (originating values) that enable thriving communities to meet and exceed their original constitutive aims.⁵¹

Brokenness

The constitutive features of persons are sources of both strength and weakness. Their physical embodiment underlies their organic, perceptual, affective, and intellectual development. As their bodies grow and mature, they provide a causal foundation for their moral and spiritual maturity as

⁴⁸MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 157-62.

⁴⁹MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 204-21.

⁵⁰MacIntyre's influence, especially the claims and arguments of *After Virtue*, can be discerned throughout chap. 7, "The Good," in Smith's *What Is a Person?*

⁵¹*Method in Theology*, 48-51.

well. The principle of emergence recognizes the dependence of the spiritual on the physical without conflating the salient differences between them. But the frailty of the human body, its susceptibility to illness, disorder, and breakdown, accounts for one aspect of personal frailty as well. Our development and flourishing as persons normally depends on preserving bodily health and strength, and avoiding serious illness, especially disorders of the lungs, heart, brain, and central nervous system. Persons are beings unto death; and the threat of death through violence, sickness, or accident is omnipresent throughout human life.⁵²

Our historical embeddedness is also a double-edged sword. In our homes, schools, neighborhoods, places of work, worship, and leisure, we acquire the virtues, internalize the standards, and establish the interpersonal bonds that enable us to live wisely and well. But these sources of communal belonging are subject to their own forms of disorder and decline. Families can be centers of love, hate, indifference, and prejudice. Schools can be mediocre or worse, staffed by incompetent and callous teachers more intent on personal security than on the critical education of the young. Neighborhoods can be vibrant and beautiful, or wracked with poverty, resentment, and crime, at one end of the spectrum, or jaded by wealth, privilege, and concentrated power at the other. Work can be meaningful and elevating or deadening and corrupt; worship can be challenging and generous or narrowly sectarian and complacent. Leisure can be devoted to reflection, citizenship, and service or indulgence in trivia, luxury, and vice. The breakdown of cultural and social institutions turns a major source of personal development into a collective instrument of individual and communal decline.

But the frailty of our bodies and the tangled mixture of order and disorder in our communities are not the only sources of personal brokenness. We can be healthy and foolish, well-educated and selfish, fairly treated and unjust, blessed by God and insistent on having our own way. Human life is such a mystery that the physically impaired can do great things, the badly schooled can rise above their impoverished education, those raised without faith can become ardent in their love of God and neighbor. The deep freedom of the person can make flowers bloom in the desert, and envious pride turn husband against wife, brother against brother, friend against irreplaceable friend. Human persons, human communities, seem incapable of sustained

⁵²Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 75-78, 410-42.

development, regularly refuse the inner summons to self-transcendence, fall back on self-serving ideologies that justify their sins, personal and collective, begin life with such high promise and end in suicidal despair. Such is the persistent reality of the human condition.

The mysterious history of persons is a tale of development and decline, virtue and vice, holiness and sin, creation and destruction, power and impotence. Never more so than now, when the unprecedented scope of our moral aspirations seems to dwarf the creative sources of power and healing to which we give our shared assent and allegiance.⁵³

Self-Transcendence: Sources and Obstacles

There are striking parallels between Christian Smith's ontology of the person and Bernard Lonergan's reflective turn to the intentional subject. Both thinkers emphasize the importance and difficulty of self-knowledge and its essential role in understanding human existence. In fact, Lonergan makes critical self-appropriation indispensable to developing a credible philosophy and theology at the exigent level and standards "of our time."⁵⁴

But how is critical self-appropriation to be achieved? Through intentional analysis of the subject's polymorphic consciousness; through recognizing the different patterns of conscious experience; through emphasizing the intellectual pattern of experience in which the focus is on the subject as unrestricted inquirer seeking objective knowledge in the several realms of cognitive meaning; by discovering the generalized empirical method that unifies the different ways of knowing; by affirming a critical epistemic realism in which reality is known through true judgments that are themselves the answers we give to our unrestricted questions for intelligence and reflection; by developing the ontological implications of critical realism that extend from a cosmology of emergent probability to an anthropology of situated persons operating effectively within institutional and cultural schemes of recurrence; by acknowledging the subject's profound dependence on these sustaining schemes as well as its critical autonomy within them.⁵⁵

⁵³See Bernard Lonergan, *A Third Collection* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), chap. 7, "Healing and Creating in History," 100-112.

⁵⁴The critical importance of self-knowledge is asserted, defended, and amplified throughout *Insight and Method in Theology*.

⁵⁵This highly compressed paragraph summarizes Lonergan's complex dialectical argument in *Insight and Method in Theology*.

This constitutive dependence and relative autonomy apply to intentional subjects as both moral and epistemic agents. Authentic living sublates objective knowing by working out the practical implications of our knowledge at both the personal and historical levels of existence. As inquiring intelligence sublates perception, imagination, and memory, and reflective criticism sublates intellectual discovery, so moral judgments, decisions, and choices make us personally responsible for the lives we lead and the historical communities in which we live them.⁵⁶

No adequate account of the polymorphic subject, however, can ignore human brokenness: the power of bias (dramatic, egoistic, group, and general) to disrupt our intentional activity; our proven incapacity for sustained development; our vulnerability to sin, both personal and social; our resort to ideologies as justifications of our aberrant conduct and moral impotence.⁵⁷

For Lonergan, at the core of human existence are the transcendental desires that summon us to self-transcendence and the transcendental norms that require our fidelity to these erotic and exigent summonses. These immanent desires for intelligibility, truth, reality, and the good in their various forms can also lead us to God as the *arche* and *telos* of all existence. The central drama of human living is the constant struggle between these constitutive desires and norms and the barriers of bias and sin that thwart their authentic unfolding. Objectivity in our knowing, authenticity in our living, are the laudable fruits of achieving self-transcendence, both personally and communally.⁵⁸

But the tangled knot of our existence, its sobering mixture of greatness and wretchedness, forcefully reminds us of our constant need for healing and redemptive grace. To provide the best and most credible account of human existence, our moral ontology should extend beyond persons, however richly conceived, to the reality of God as creator and redeemer. Given our human strengths and weaknesses, given our demonstrated failure to meet our moral aspirations reliably, explicitly recognizing our need for grace and forgiveness may well be required to lessen the troubling

⁵⁶For Lonergan's commitment to personal and historical authenticity, see *Collection*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 224-31; for his commitment to both personal and historical responsibility, see *A Third Collection*, 176-82.

⁵⁷For "moral impotence," see *Insight*, 627-30; for ideology as justifying the refusal of self-transcendence, see *Method in Theology*, 357-66.

⁵⁸For achieving objectivity through epistemic, moral, and religious self-transcendence, see *Method in Theology*, 37, 338.

gap between ontology and advocacy at the core of our common discontent. By critically retrieving these rejected moral sources, Taylor, Smith, and Lonergan become important, if unacknowledged, allies in the central moral argument of our time.

PERSONHOOD, DIGNITY, AND RESPECT:
A CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF
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CHRISTIAN SMITH PROPOSES an account of human dignity as a proactively emergent feature of human personhood; specifically human dignity expresses the moral value of the continued and flourishing existence of the person. Smith's account succeeds in showing that human dignity is what Lonergan scholars would call a personal value on the scale of values. His approach also shows that human dignity understood in this way generates a consequent vital value, the respect one needs to flourish as a whole human being. This not only calls forth the moral responsibility of other human agents towards the person, but also suggests a significant corrective to ordinary accounts of the human sciences, not unrelated to Robert Doran's corrective to psychotherapeutic accounts of the person and Lonergan's correction of economic theory. Smith's account of human dignity, however, would be strengthened by a tighter account of emergence, an explicit link to the scale of values (to differentiate more clearly among social, cultural, and personal engagement with human dignity), and a clearer distinction among intentionality analysis, epistemology, and metaphysics (Smith is positional on all three, but can be confused about his expressions).

PERSONHOOD AS EMERGENT

In order to comment responsibly on Smith's account of human dignity, it is important to rehearse the broad strokes of his notion of personhood as emergent. I will not give the full account presented in chapter 1 – the reader

should refer to the review of that chapter in the present volume – but present only the significant elements of the argument.

After presenting an initial description of the basic notion of emergence that grounds his account, Smith discusses the set of thirty distinct and interrelated causal capacities that emerge from the brain-body material whole as it operates in the world. These causal capacities are then ordered to each other in a matrix that captures their interaction, their upwardly emergent, and their downwardly dependent, dynamic relations. It is from this complex interaction that human personhood emerges as a distinctly new ontological reality not reducible to the sum of the capacities listed in the argument: we can understand persons as higher-order, emergent beings existing through the interactive functioning of specific, lower-order, human causal capacities, which, when related in operation in those ways, sustain personhood.¹

A person is “a conscious, reflexive, embodied, self-transcending center of subjective experience, durable identity, moral commitment, and social communication who – as the efficient cause of his or her own responsible actions and interactions – exercises complex capacities for agency and intersubjectivity in order to develop and sustain his or her own incommunicable self in loving relationships with other personal selves and with the non personal world.”² It is the centeredness of personhood and its purposive orientation that prevent reducing the notion of person to the list of causal capacities that form part of the definition and out of which personhood emerges: “So what is new in emergent personhood that does not exist in the human capacities? The primary answer is: *centers with purpose* of a particular kind.” The personal center “integrates, coordinates and directs those capacities in new, purposeful ways.”³ The purpose can be understood as “the natural and objective project of being a person.”⁴

The final key feature to highlight is that emergent personhood is a form of proactive (rather than responsive) emergence: “Persons are not subsequent products of purely physical processes, the final outcomes of a temporal series of events governed by other agents at the end of which

¹Christian Smith, *What Is a Person?: Rethinking Humanity, Social Life, and the Moral Good from the Person Up* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 59.

²Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 61.

³Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 79.

⁴Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 80.

persons emerge. To the contrary, ontologically, personhood adheres in the human from the start – even if in only the most nascent, densely compacted form possible – acting as the causal agent of its own development.”⁵

The basic notion of person defended by Smith, then, holds together two mutually mediating terms, “being a center” and “acting with purpose,” as constitutive of the emergent reality of personal existence that orders and directs the human operations that both sustain personhood and serve as instrumental causes in the creation and execution of a specific project of being a person. Human persons are thus that ontological reality that sublates the human capacities that themselves sublate human bodies in an integrated unity, identity, whole.

HUMAN DIGNITY

After defending his proposal against competing theoretical accounts, Smith turns in chapters 6 through 8 to constructive issues, approaching the notion of human dignity in three broad steps.

He first grounds the emergence of social structures in the reality of the person, and then shows the downward causation of social reality on personal development and agency. The theoretical notion of a social structure is central to the practice of sociology, but has not been adequately defined for itself. Smith proposes a critical realist definition of social structures that includes those “real characteristics . . . that are definitionally important and analytically illuminating.”⁶ While showing how social structures are rooted in embodied patterns of bodily practice, Smith’s view highlights that the reality of social structures is “irreducible to acting human persons” and that “social structures exist at a level other than and above personal human lives.”⁷ It is from the interactions of human persons that “patterns of social relations emerge . . . that are durable [though dynamically evolving], historically continuous, and capable of exerting influence on other entities, including those from which they emerged.”⁸ After an extensive discussion of the sources of social structures, Smith turns to their “downward” efficient causality. I wish to highlight only two of the features of this causality: first, that social

⁵Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 87-88.

⁶Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 326.

⁷Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 328.

⁸Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 328.

structures are motivated by "normative and moral valuations and guides," and reproduce these valuations in the persons who participate in them; second they are always defined and sustained by "culturally meaningful cognitive categories."⁹ Smith thus links the social and the cultural, as well as the social and the human good, as sets of mutually mediating terms.

In chapter 7, Smith proposes a general account of the human good as emergent from the reality of personhood; he argues for a teleological account of the good that distinguishes general telos from personal telos, and both from concrete life projects.¹⁰ This links to another mutually mediating set of terms that constitute the life project, namely acting for the good of others and acting for one's personal good: promoting the good of others promotes one's personal good and vice versa.¹¹ This in turn grounds an account of the virtues as promoting at once the good of others and one's own flourishing as a person. All of this allows him to link political, economic, technological, personal, and vital goods.¹² All of these goods are ultimately grounded in a basic good: "In sum, what is personally moral and interpersonally excellent is driven by the interests of flourishing personhood. What is socially, politically, culturally, and institutionally good, fair, just, and worthy are also driven by the interests of flourishing personhood."¹³

This brings us to chapter 8 and the account Smith gives of human dignity. Dignity "is a real, objective feature of human personhood."¹⁴ Dignity is that "inherent worth of immeasurable value that is deserving of certain morally appropriate responses."¹⁵ These morally appropriate responses can be initially expressed as prescriptions: persons "ought not treat other persons as things," since this denies the ontological reality of emergent personhood; similarly, "persons should not be treated as means," but always as ends; persons have natural inalienable rights that guarantee their flourishing, and receiving and respecting those rights is a condition of my own authentic flourishing; persons "are responsible to develop and exercise their personal capacities to enhance their own well-being and that of other persons;" and

⁹Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 349.

¹⁰Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 416-17.

¹¹Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 406ff.

¹²Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 418-21.

¹³Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 420.

¹⁴Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 434.

¹⁵Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 435.

finally, "all social institutions and practices should exist and function to serve the development of the people whose lives they touch."¹⁶

Smith proposes a retorsion argument in support of the "objectively real, though intangible" character of human dignity: "... reasoned cases against human dignity are arguably self-undermining insofar as, if they are valid, nobody is obliged to pay their proponents the respect of listening to and answering them – if we humans truly lack an innate dignity as persons, we are free to disregard any others at will with whom we do not wish to engage, without having to offer, even in principle, any account justifying our indifferent and dismissive treatment of them."¹⁷ This retorsion argument is bolstered with an argument from experience, that dignity is validated in the phenomenological experience of most people: "I, for instance, experience myself – even in my most self-disesteeming moments – as embodying a dignity I cannot deny or denounce. Indeed, it is only against that personal dignity that disesteem can gain any meaningful traction in the first place?"¹⁸ Further on, he writes that "dignity inheres in the nature of things and can be phenomenologically evident to beings possessing dignity"¹⁹; this is the basis for the widespread affirmation of human dignity in religious, philosophical, and other accounts of the person.

This basic affirmation is developed by a historical survey of the various ways that human beings have articulated in their behaviors as much as in their commonsense ideas, their phenomenological sense of dignity. Human beings "at all times and everywhere, as far as we know, are concerned with modesty, feel shame, attend to etiquette, are able to feel pride in self, have shared standards of courtesy, feel responsible for their actions, understand that people have private inner lives, symbolically mourn their dead, use the same facial expressions to convey disgust and contempt, and engage in rituals of respect for one another."²⁰ It is also the case that "unique human emotions ... clue us in to the universality of dignity – the most obvious is indignation, which is a particular kind of anger, one that results from the perception of having one's dignity violated by injustice, disrespect, or meanness."²¹

¹⁶Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 436-37.

¹⁷Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 439-40.

¹⁸Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 440.

¹⁹Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 441.

²⁰Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 445.

²¹Smith, *What Is a Person?*, 446.

REFLECTIONS ON THE ARGUMENT

A Positional Correction to Sociological Theory

Smith's overall argument shares significant elements with Robert Doran's critical realist realignment of Jungian psychology in *Psyche and Spirit* and *Theology and the Dialectics of History*. Smith's account of the key notion of social structure parallels Doran's realignment of the Jungian collective unconscious; by relying, as Doran does, on a positional epistemology and account of method, Smith provides an empirical and empirically verifiable account of social structure that rids it of conceptualist determinism and overcomes empiricist dismissals of the concept. In the same way that Doran's retrieval of a teleological orientation allows him to distinguish between archetypal and anagogic symbols, thereby overcoming Jung's confusion of human integration and human self-transcendence, so here Smith's retrieval of a teleological perspective in sociology allows him to not only restore a moral perspective to the discipline, but also to distinguish and relate (at least in a general fashion) the various kinds of human goods to each other, and to ground them in a basic good, the authentic flourishing of the human person. This is a significant achievement, and it complements Doran's own contribution, as well as Lonergan's achievements in the field of political economy and Thomas McPartland's in historiography.²²

This valuable contribution could be further developed and enhanced by engaging Lonergan's account of the scale of values, particularly as it has been developed and amplified by Doran's work in *Theology and the Dialectics of History*.²³ This would provide Smith with an explanatory account of the various human goods as a set of mutually defining terms and relations. At least as they are presented in this book, Smith's discussion of the order of these goods is very suggestive, and even seems positional, but it remains phenomenological.

²²Thomas McPartland, *Lonergan and Historiography: The Epistemological Philosophy of History* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2010); also, *Lonergan and the Philosophy of Historical Existence* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000).

²³Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990). See especially chapters 4, 11, 12, and 15. For a more compact introductory account, consult "Suffering Servanthood and the Scale of Values," in *Theological Foundations 2: Theology and Culture* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1995).

So what exactly would Doran's discussion and expansion of the scale of values bring to Smith's account? First, Lonergan's basic presentation of the scale of values provides an explanatory basis that orders the person as beneficiary of social order to that social order as distributing vital goods, and the person as proactively responsible for a just social order to the cultural values that regulate social justice. Second, Doran's expansion of the level of social value relates spontaneous intersubjectivity to the technologies, economies, and politics developed by practical intelligence as it seeks to meet the requirements of a just distribution of vital goods. Third, Doran's critique of Marx distinguishes clearly between the goods of order that are the fruits of practical intelligence, and the level of cultural values that regulate the just functioning of these goods of order.

Doran summarizes Lonergan's discussion of the scale of values in *Method in Theology* in an extended paragraph in chapter 4 of *Theology and the Dialectics of History*: "Feelings, when authentic, respond to values according to a preferential scale, where the respective positions in the scale are based in the self-transcendence to which we are carried by different types of value. . . . Vital values are the values conducive to health and strength, grace, and vigor. Social values consist of a social order whose schemes of recurrence guarantee vital values to the whole community. Cultural values are the meanings, values, and orientations informing the living and operating of the community. Personal value is the authentic subject as originating value in the community. And religious value is the grace that enables the subject, the culture, the community, to be authentic. At each successive level we are carried to a greater degree of self-transcendence in our affective and effective response."²⁴ This basic structure of the scale of values confirms some basic elements of Smith's analysis of person, society, and meaning and the relations among them, but offers an explanatory account of the emergence of one level from the level below it – through an account of greater self-transcendence, in which the lower value represents a pole of limitation and the higher value a pole of transcendence – as well as an account of the regulatory role which the higher level plays in relation to the lower level. We can thus more clearly distinguish between the person as having inherent dignity (the level of personal value), from the respect of that dignity needed for human flourishing (a specifically distinct vital value),

²⁴Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 94.

and from the person as moral agent responsible for the good of the other (personal value as authenticity rooted in moral conversion).

Doran's further expansion of the level of social value by means of the dialectic of community allows us to relate the question of human dignity as vital value to the creative tension between the social infrastructure and the spontaneous intersubjectivity that forms the basis of the social bond. Like Smith, Doran understands structures as recurrent patterns of collaboration:

technology arises and develops because of the recurrent intervention of practical intelligence to devise means to meet more readily the recurrent desires of the community for the particular goods that satisfy their vital needs. The recurrent interventions call forth a division of labor and an economic system. . . . The evocation of the economic system is for the sake of meeting the problems set by the distribution of the consumer goods emergent from the technological institutions. . . . The economy, finally, evokes the polity, for the sake of effective agreement. . . . The evocation of the polity is occasioned by the need to resolve harmoniously the problems set by 'the need to keep a healthy social bond in productive tension with' the new stages emergent from practical intelligence in the economic and technological orders.²⁵

A little further Doran specifies the role of politics in greater detail as a function of this creative tension: "The genuine function of politics is not to guarantee by ideology the capitulation of practical intelligence to group ethos or of speculative intelligence to instrumental practicality, but quite the contrary, to persuade individuals and groups to subordinate and adapt their vital spontaneities to genuinely practical ideas, and to persuade the proponents of such ideas to respect the legitimate demands of individual and group spontaneity."²⁶ This insistence on the role of intersubjective spontaneity as a constitutive element of society is the fruit of Doran's critique of Marx: taking up the critique of Marx's dialectic offered by Habermas,²⁷ Doran shows that the dialectic of means and relations of production is a

²⁵Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 104.

²⁶Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 105.

²⁷Another interesting conversation partner here would be Jean-Luc Nancy in *The Inoperative Community* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), who flags a similar dialectical creative tension between instrumental and non-instrumental action.

dialectic that holds only within instrumental interaction and systematically neglects communicative (non-instrumental) interaction.²⁸ This promotes a systematic capitulation of theoretical to practical intelligence in the analysis of society, a point that Smith also acknowledges. As Doran suggests: "To the extent that the social situation displays an integral unity of intersubjectivity and practicality, it is intelligible, good and just. To the extent that it reflects the dominance of one or other principle, or the subordination of one to the other . . . the situation falls short of intelligibility, goodness, and justice."²⁹ As we shall see in the next section on Being and Good, this richer account of social value can provide a very helpful explanatory context for Smith's exploration of feelings as intentional apprehensions of human dignity in relation to social structures.

Finally, Doran's critical dialogue with Marx also engages the question of the relations between infrastructure and superstructure and overcomes the reduction of cultural to social value that sees cultural values as mere ideology. According to Doran, Marxist analysis is insufficiently detached from the norms of practical intelligence. Because of this, "it elevates facts into norms or laws and seeks a solution at the level of these facts rather than at a genuinely normative level."³⁰ Because, as we have already seen, it neglects non-instrumental praxis, it reduces all praxis to instrumentalized technique. It therefore cannot grasp that "the most offensive characteristic of an oppressive set of social structures is that, by depriving people of the basic vital values meeting vital needs, such structures remove the conditions of the possibility of satisfying the deeper desire and pattern [of human] experience in such a way that "it becomes impossible" to succeed in the drama of existence by finding and holding to the direction that can be found but also missed and lost in the movement of life. . . . [so] as to make of one's world, one's relation with others, and concomitantly oneself, a work of art. . . . "³¹ Both of these limitations ensure that Marxist analysis systematically reduces culture to the level of social value, neglecting the role of culture in promoting the detached and disinterested appropriation of meaning and value that can enable persons as moral agents to regulate social structures. Classically inspired political thought, in response to

²⁸Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 359.

²⁹Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 372.

³⁰Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 410.

³¹Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 358.

Marxist analysis, tends to emphasize a "conversion position" on praxis: it is authentic persons, persons of virtue, who can ensure that justice is done. But such positions tend to neglect the relation of virtuous persons to social structures, a relation that is mediated by cultural values, even as Marxist analysis neglects the importance of genuinely creative moral agents.³²

All three of these elements ground a necessary reorientation of the social sciences for which Doran calls but which he does not himself perform: "North American sociology . . . has fallen victim to precisely the same aberrations that Lonergan stigmatizes when he speaks of the major surrender of intelligence: fragmented specialization within an uncriticized cultural and social situation; neglect of the values that give meaning to a way of life; study of opinions as data isolated from the interpretive systems that account for their interrelations and contradictions; quantitative measuring of adherences instead of analysis of underlying motivations; neglect of developmental tensions in the formation of ideas and attitudes; oversight of largely unconscious biases in the process of such formation; and the transformation of sociology into a manipulative psychology of human engineering. . . ." ³³ I believe that this is precisely the reorientation that Smith articulates in his book, and particularly on the question of human dignity; I also believe that this richer theoretical framework could help him ground and expand his account of the person.

Anchored in the Relation between the Transcendental Notions of Being and Good

The basic structure of Smith's account of human dignity as a good relies on the Aristotelian-Thomist definition of the good in relation to being: the notions of good and being are convertible; "good" adds to "being" the notion of "to be desirable." In Lonerganian terms, a judgment of value adds "this is desirable" to the "this is so" of a judgment of fact. Human dignity is thus the objective correlate of the feeling responses of shame, indignation, orientation to modesty, pride in self. These feelings are intentional apprehensions of the unique value that is human dignity.

³²Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 475. An important and particularly clear summary of the distortions that obtain in the scale of values as a result of this situation can be found in "Suffering Servanthood and the Scale of Values."

³³Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 427.

Smith's significant contribution here is to identify human dignity as a personal value on Lonergan's scale, as the value of the continued existence of the person, independent of but as the necessary condition for her flourishing through operating in the world. Respect for human dignity thus becomes one of the vital goods that is perceived in intersubjective spontaneity and ought to be promoted by technological advances, justly distributed by economic systems, protected by political choices, affirmed and reflected upon by cultural values, chosen as part of one's authentic life project, and defended by the religious influx of God's love flooding the human heart. Smith's achievement here complements and amplifies the scale of values, with the caveat voiced above, however, that he lacks an explanatory account of the relations among the various goods.

Relying on a Very General Notion of Emergence

Smith's argument for an emergent notion of personhood, and then for human dignity as an emergent property of human personhood, relies on a notion of emergence articulated within the experimental sciences. Chapter 1, which introduces the notion of emergence before applying it to the question of human personhood, presents the notion with a wealth of examples. I would propose that Lonergan's more precise definition of emergence, by means of identifying schemes of recurrence and operators and integrators, and relying on a strong account of vertical finality, could complement Smith's account by supplying additional explanatory terms and relations. This, in turn, would anchor a fuller account of the human good according to a scale of values. The key insights to be retrieved from Lonergan's account of emergence are: the notion of schemes of recurrence as combinations of classical and statistical laws; the consequent distinction between the Darwinian account of species difference as a "gradual accumulation of small variations" and the Lonerganian account of a "higher systematization of a controlled aggregation of aggregates of aggregates of aggregates"³⁴; human knowing and loving as a "higher system" that is also "a perennial source of higher systems."³⁵

³⁴Bernard Lonergan, *Insight*, vol. 3 of the Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 290.

³⁵*Insight*, 291.

Smith correctly grasps that the thirty or so distinct and interrelated causal capacities that emerge from the brain-body material whole are ordered to each other in such a way that they "upwardly" sustain emergent human personhood and "downwardly" condition the dynamic relations among the causal capacities. Smith's account provides a helpful, functionally positional model of the matrix of causal capacities, but without some understanding of the relations between classical and statistical laws, it cannot offer the explanatory grasp which this understanding gives: a grasp of the intelligible nexus among the causal capacities according to a set of intelligible relations that are either classical or statistical laws.

This is precisely what grounds the difference between Darwinian "accumulation of small variations" and Lonerganian "higher systematization": "a species is not conceived as an accumulated aggregate of theoretically observable variations; on the contrary, it is an intelligible solution to a problem of living in a given environment, where the living is a higher systematization of a controlled aggregation of aggregates of aggregates of aggregates. . . ." ³⁶ A species is thus not "some aggregation of sensible qualities" but rather identifies an intelligible unity in data. As a result, species will not be differentiated by the aggregation of characteristics, but rather by the intelligible differences among "higher systems." Thus "an explanatory account of animal species will differentiate animals not by their organic but by their psychic differences . . . The animal pertains to an explanatory genus beyond that of the plant; that explanatory genus turns on sensibility; its specific differences are differences of sensibility; and it is in differences of sensibility that are to be found the basis for differences of organic structure, since that structure, as we have seen, possesses a degree of freedom that is limited, but not controlled, by underlying materials and outer circumstances." ³⁷

This account of specific difference is important, because it gives an explanatory basis for Smith's positional insistence on the definition of person as "a centre with purpose"; but it turns Smith's account on its head, in the sense that it makes person the explanatory basis upon which the matrix of causal capacities can be understood. We understand in light of this that Smith's account, while it is positional, is in the "via inventionis"; Lonergan's account of emergence could strengthen Smith's definition by placing it in the "via doctrinae."

³⁶*Insight*, 290.

³⁷*Insight*, 290-91.

The third and final element to be retrieved, I have suggested, is Lonergan's key distinction between sensitive process and human knowing and loving: "As sensitive appetite and perception are a higher system of the organic, so inquiry and insight, reflection and judgment, deliberation, and choice are a higher system of sensitive process."³⁸ This higher system of knowing and loving is the basis of the purpose which persons as centers have, and is the source of both the aesthetic-dramatic and practical freedom which persons have from the biological pattern. The root of this double liberation rests, Lonergan suggests, on two facts: "On the one hand, inquiry and insight are not so much a higher system as a perennial source of higher systems, so that human living has its basic task in reflecting on systems and judging them, deliberating on their implantation and choosing between possibilities. On the other hand, there can be in man a perennial source of higher systems because the materials of such systematization are not built into his constitution."³⁹ As a result, social structures and cultural communities emerge from human operations according to a schedule of probabilities that is determined not by outer conditions, but by authentic and inauthentic exercises of human knowing and loving. Thus, social values emerge, as we have seen, as a function of the exercise of practical intelligence (seeking to provide solutions for the just distribution of vital values) in creative tension with intersubjective spontaneity; cultural values emerge from social situations as human beings seek to grasp a direction in the flow of life lived together; personal value is the human being operating authentically as a source of meaning and value, both appropriating and transforming cultural values into a higher personal synthesis. In turn, the higher systems, from personal authenticity, to cultural value, to social justice, regulate the lower systems. The scale of values, while it prolongs emergence as a constitutive dimension of world process, prolongs it on a new basis, that of human knowing and loving. Nevertheless, understanding the scale of values according to the same general heuristic of emergent probability will help correctly position the use of statistical analysis in the human sciences to the use of other more hermeneutical and humanistic methods. Roughly speaking, statistical methods will belong to the research phase of sociology, making data available for the further operations of interpretation, history, and dialectic.⁴⁰

³⁸*Insight*, 291.

³⁹*Insight*, 291.

⁴⁰Exploring the further question of sociological method according to an analogy with

Relying on an "Anti-scientistic Phenomenology"

Smith explains in chapter 2 that he will rely on an anti-scientistic phenomenology developed from the work of Charles Taylor to develop his argument. This helps him overcome and correct various materialist and reductionist biases he finds in discussions of method in sociology. Because it expands the horizon of what counts as evidence, highlights the "multi-layered" character of the real, and relates sociological observation to an emergent universe, Smith's approach reflects a positional stance on the functional specialization "research" as it is exercised in sociology. Smith is certainly clear about the limitations of empiricism, but spending some time sorting out intentionality analysis, epistemology, and metaphysics would be helpful.

The two key elements to be retrieved from *Insight* are the two pivots around which intentionality analysis is distinguished from and related to epistemology, and epistemology from metaphysics: the self-affirmation of the knower, which effects the transition from a phenomenology of human operations (intentionality analysis) to the higher viewpoint of epistemology, which understands the operations by grasping their explanatory relations to their objects, to the knowing subject, and to each other; the further expansion from epistemology to metaphysics by means of the isomorphism of knowing and known, and the consequent relation between metaphysics and the sciences.

The shift from a phenomenology of knowing to an epistemology which the self-affirmation of the knower promotes is the shift of attention from empirically derived, and so revisable, single laws "to the set of primitive terms and relations which the system employs in formulating all its laws."⁴¹ Epistemology, because it grounds explanation in the basic terms and relations of human consciousness, excludes "the radical revision that involves a shift in the fundamental terms and relations of the human knowledge underlying existing common sense, mathematics, and empirical science."⁴² This constitutes a critical base from which the methods of the various

Lonergan's differentiation of theological method in *Method in Theology* would take us too far afield here, but it remains an interesting problem raised by Smith's work. See Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

⁴¹*Insight*, 358.

⁴²*Insight*, 359.

sciences can be critically evaluated with respect to their proper objects, and understood in relation to each other, which prevents an uncritical return to the reductive empiricism Smith is trying to overcome in sociology and grounds his assertion of critical realism in first principles.

Further, the passage through epistemology grounds an intelligible relation between the sciences and metaphysics. By critically establishing notions of being⁴³ and objectivity,⁴⁴ and attending to the isomorphism of knowing and known, a transition can be effected to an explicit metaphysics: "If the knowing consists of a related set of acts and the known is the related set of contents of these acts, then the pattern of the relations between the acts is similar in form to the pattern of the relations between the contents of the acts."⁴⁵ The empirical verification of concrete and recurring structures of knowing in the self-affirmation of the knower yields, by the isomorphism of knowing and known, a proportionate heuristic structure of the known which is an explicit metaphysics. This explicit metaphysics gives further critical grounds for rejecting idealism, empiricism, and eclecticism in scientific method,⁴⁶ even as it makes explicit their unification: as a set of principles, metaphysics precedes the empirical sciences, "but as an attainment, it follows upon them, emerges from them, depends upon them; and so, like them, it will be factual."⁴⁷ Thus an emergent and explanatory account of the relation between a non-scientistic phenomenology, a critical epistemology, and a normative metaphysics can be adumbrated, and could serve as a stronger basis for Smith's critical realism in sociology, such that the elements of this sociology could be critically related to each other and to the achievements of other disciplines.

CONCLUSION

Christian Smith's discussion of human dignity, like his overall argument in *What Is a Person?* is foundational and represents a positional reorientation of the field of sociology. By reintroducing a teleological notion of the person

⁴³*Insight*, chap. 12.

⁴⁴*Insight*, chap.13.

⁴⁵*Insight*, 424.

⁴⁶*Insight*, 426-48.

⁴⁷*Insight*, 418. Benedict Ashley makes a similar point in *The Way Toward Wisdom* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006). See especially chapters 3 to 5.

and making use of a functionally positional account of method, Smith is able to show that human dignity is a personal value, that a consequent vital value, "respect for dignity," emerges from this, and relates both these values to the complex set of human goods. This is a significant contribution that converges with the ongoing reorientation of the human sciences begun by Lonergan, Doran, and McPartland. But his account could be strengthened by a more explanatory perspective on the scale of values and emergence, moving the argument from a "functionally positional" to an "explicitly positional" stance. Similarly, reflection on the distinctions and relations among intentionality analysis, method, epistemology, and metaphysics would lead to a fuller account of the relations among human personhood, human good, and human dignity.

BOOK REVIEW

To Flourish or Destruct:

A Personalist Theory of Human Good, Motivations, and Evil

Christian Smith, University of Chicago Press, 2015

BERNARD LONERGAN ONCE singled out social ethicist Gibson Winter for exceptional praise, as a model of the kind of work he hoped would emerge out of his own innovative studies of methods: "Prof. Winter has done a remarkable piece of interdisciplinary work in relating social science to ethics."¹ Were Lonergan alive today, I believe he would place sociologist Christian Smith's *To Flourish and Destruct* in that same privileged circle.² Like Winter before him, Smith engages the wide range of approaches to social science, identifies what is of great value in each approach, but also offers penetrating critiques of what is lacking.

This review will (1) summarize Smith's principal criticisms of current social science practices, (2) summarize his suggestions for a new foundation for the social sciences, (3) draw attention to important complementarities between his approach and that of Lonergan, and (4) raise questions that flow from Lonergan's work for further consideration.

SMITH'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

In *To Flourish and Destruct* Smith presents a forceful case that the research practices of contemporary social science are in dire need of reform: "much of social science currently operates with impoverished views of human beings and propagates such views among social-science consumers" (266, for example, policymakers and the general public). He argues that these

¹Bernard Lonergan, "The Example of Gibson Winter," in *A Second Collection*, ed. William F. J. Ryan and Bernard J. Tyrrell (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974), 189-92.

²Christian Smith, *To Flourish or Destruct?: A Personalist Theory of Human Goods, Motivations, Failure, and Evil* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015). Page references appear in parentheses in the body of the main text..

practices neither do justice to the data on human behavior, nor meet the standards for adequate scientific explanations.

Any science, including a human or social science, is about the business of understanding causes. Science . . . is about learning what exists in reality and how it works. (49)

Unfortunately, says Smith, the ideal of finding causal explanations for human actions has been almost completely abandoned by social scientists. Smith blames this abandonment on widespread adoption of flawed philosophical foundations throughout the social sciences, including believing either that causes are not real, or cannot be known if they are real. Resting upon such weakened foundations, "social science amounts to only so much gathering and cataloguing of empirical facts . . . [which] usually turns out to be boring" (20-21). Smith's book sets forth an extensive critique of such failings in the social sciences, and sociology in particular, as currently practiced.

Smith is well positioned to render this critique and to offer a more substantial alternative foundation. He has authored or co-authored numerous empirical sociological studies on such topics as the U.S. Central American peace movement, race and evangelical religion, the generosity of Americans, and the religious and spiritual lives of American teenagers and young adults. In addition, his command of the theoretical issues is impressive. The footnotes to the book reveal the breadth and detail of his knowledge of the vast range of literature from the founders and contemporary influential thinkers in the discipline of sociology, as well as in philosophy (especially philosophy of science) and other disciplines.

In contrast to the prevailing theoretical assumptions, Smith argues that human personal motivations are the real causes of human behaviors and social events. "A social science that misses the centrality of motivated actions will therefore not be getting entirely right large swaths of human activities, in fact most of the kinds of human actions that are of greatest interest to and importance for social scientific understanding and explanation" (67). However, the attempt to scientifically study motives, let alone to regard them as real causes in human affairs, has been abandoned in social science. The reason, says Smith, is that motivations cannot be directly observed, which contradicts the prevailing philosophical assumption limiting science to such direct observation.

I recall my own astonishment when I first read Durkheim's bizarre but widely accepted definition of suicide. Durkheim refused to distinguish acts of heroic self-sacrifice from acts of self-destruction that arose out of the depths of despair because, he claimed, it is only possible to scientifically know another person's actions, not the motives behind those actions. Contrary to such exaggerated claims by Durkheim and numerous others, Smith responds by quoting sociologist Robert MacIver: "There is no demonstration [by skeptics] that access to [motivations] is impossible, but only that it is difficult" (113, brackets are Smith's). Elsewhere Smith draws attention to the fact that the natural sciences make use of all sorts of factors that cannot be *directly* observed (e.g., electromagnetic fields or tectonic plates). The fact that it is difficult to arrive at critical, scientifically justifiable accounts of motivations which are not directly observed is no excuse for giving up the search for creative methods for identifying and verifying them. Rather, Smith argues, social sciences have an obligation to take up the challenges posed for scientific investigation of motivations. The fact that they have failed to do so, he suggests, is due in part to commitments to "ideologies and political programs" (see, for example, 9).

Smith provides extensive discussions of the pervasive influences within the social sciences of other philosophical assumptions. In the introduction, he identifies four classic models (and an "upstart fifth") that frame research in sociology and social science (an approach reminiscent of Gibson Winter's approach in *Elements for a Social Ethic*): Smith characterizes the four classic approaches to social science in terms of their "general models of human beings": "dependent norm followers" (Durkheim, Parsons, Geertz, and Douglas among others); "materialist group-interest seekers (including Hobbes, Marx, Weber, and C. Wright Mills); "autonomous, self-interested individuals" (such as Locke, von Mises, Hayek); and "communicative, interacting meaning-makers" (for example, Mead, Berger, Garfinkel, Goffman, and Giddens). Smith also discusses the powerful, recent impact of a fifth approach to sociological analysis: "evolved neuro-genetic biochemical behaviors" (notably, Wilson, Dawkins, Dennett, and Pinker). In later chapters he examines in greater detail these assumptions about the nature of human beings and the problems they encounter. In chapter 3 he examines "social situationism" – "not a distinct or official school of theory, but rather a broad and related set of intellectual movements that have shaped the basic terms and sensibilities of much sociological theorizing" (91). He analyzes

the outlook of social situationism in terms of eight characteristics, the most telling of which is the assumption that "people are products of social interactions" (94). Social situationism virtually ignores personal motives, individual responsibility, and "personal life projects" as real sources of human actions. This "has the effect of dragging humanity down" (93).

Smith is far from dismissive of the work done by the prevailing approaches to social science, including the social situationists. To the contrary, he praises their many insights as *partial* contributions to a more complete understanding and explanation of human action. Yet he still faults them for their exclusive emphasis on social determinism to the exclusion of personal agency. In this way Smith manifests the spirit of Lonergan's dialectical method by identifying what is most basic among underlying assumptions and then "promoting the positions, reversing the counter-positions."

This dialectical approach is highlighted in Smith's comparison of two important 1940 essays by C. Wright Mills and Robert MacIver. Where MacIver's essay displays a balanced approach taking into account both social and personal factors, Wright Mills's essay exaggerates the social factors. Nevertheless, Wright Mills's essay had a powerful influence on the future practice of sociology, while MacIver's essay fell into comparative obscurity. The difference is traceable to something like the presence or absence of what Lonergan calls intellectual conversion – openness or refusal to accepting persons, motives, and causes as ontologically real.

Later in chapter 4 Smith returns to the very origins of modern scientific sociology by means of a close reading of the works of three founders of the discipline – Marx, Durkheim, and Weber – arguing that each founder held a particular view about human nature, and that these views had a profound impact on their own work, as well as on that of the generations of later sociologists influenced by them. Most interesting is his careful analysis of Marx. Many Marxists have denied that Marx believed in such a thing as human nature, holding, rather, that human beings are completely determined by the *praxis* of their participation in the various modes of production. Smith to the contrary shows that Marx held a well-defined concept of human nature and actually said so in numerous texts. The lessons that follow from Smith's meticulous examinations of Marx, Durkheim, and Weber are twofold. First, "No sociology can proceed without at least some implicit assumptions about human nature and motivations" (158).

And, second, the particular assumptions adopted by the three founders are inadequate if not inconsistent. Durkheim, for example, "valued and believed in the goodness of social order," but his assumptions about human nature provide no basis whatsoever to support that value commitment; in fact, they tend to undermine it (135-36).

A NEW FOUNDATION FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE:
CRITICAL REALIST PERSONALISM

Smith is not content to merely criticize the prevailing modes of social scientific investigation. Rather he uses these critiques as the point of departure for a new foundation for social science in "critical realist personalism." In chapter 1 he explains his understanding of critical realist personalism by summarizing the key points developed in his previous book, *What Is a Person?* (discussed at length in the essays in this volume). The framework of "critical realism" is drawn from the writings of Roy Bhaskar, along with others. This is a "realism" because it "begins with a set of assumptions about reality that is both commonsensical and intellectually defensible" (32). It is "critical" because it takes seriously postmodern criticisms – especially their emphasis on the fallibility and perspectival nature of human knowledge, and their criticisms of modernity's obsessions with certitude, rationality, and foundationalism. But unlike other postmodern philosophies, Bhaskar's critical realism does not succumb to relativism or nihilism. Smith supplements Bhaskar's critical realism with an understanding of personalism drawn from a tradition that includes Martin Buber, Jacques Maritain, Emmanuel Mounier, Michael Polanyi, Karol Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II), John Crosby, and Robert Spaemann, among others. Critical realist personalism is Smith's unique synthesis of these two approaches, personalism plus critical realism.

Central to Smith's argument (drawn from the critical realist framework) is his affirmation of the ontological status of persons. Here "ontological" means two things. First, it means that persons are real, existing beings. This claim is directed against widespread antirealist assumptions held by social scientists and philosophers. This includes the many thinkers for whom the only realities are elementary material entities (subatomic particles, chemical molecules, genes, or perhaps neurons and their impulses). Such thinkers therefore hold that persons have no reality unto themselves; they are nothing but assemblies or collections of much more elementary realities.

Smith's affirmation of persons as real is likewise directed against those who argue that "person" is merely a socially constructed category as there are no ontologically real persons existing independently of social practices that construct the category of "person." Smith's emphatic and repeated assertions of the reality of persons opposes both sets of antirealist claims.

For Smith "ontological" also has a second connotation – namely, that persons have fixed natures with specific sets of properties, capabilities, powers, and limitations (see, for example, 30 and 40). As he puts it, for personalism (and therefore for proper social sciences as well) the most basic question is "what persons *are*" (35). Yet he is keenly aware of the many prior criticisms of theories of the nature of persons that have been offered. He recognizes that prior attempts have been excessively rigid and have uncritically assumed that culturally specific qualities are universal to all human persons. Hence his own definition of person is especially flexible and nuanced:

By "person" I mean the particular kind of being that under proper conditions is capable of developing into (or has developed into) a conscious, reflexive, embodied, self-transcending center of subjective experience, durable identity, moral commitment and social communication . . . in order to develop and sustain his or her own incommunicable self in loving relationships. (35)

This definition reflects much of the larger framework of critical realism, namely, that reality is "differentiated, ordered, complex, . . . stratified" and emergent (32, 36). By means of these key assumptions, critical realism opposes all forms of reductionism. It also affirms the reality of "downward causation," where the capacities of higher levels influence the conditions under which the lower levels operate. It further insists that methods of investigation must be developed which are appropriate to the differentiated strata of reality to which they are applied.

In particular for Smith this means that both persons (and social institutions and social interactions) are "emergent":

Emergence refers to the process of constituting a new entity with its own particular characteristics and capacities through the interactive combination of other, different entities that are necessary to create the

new entity but which themselves do not contain the characteristics present in the new entity. (36)

Emergence is a feature of all of reality according to critical realist personalism, but is especially noteworthy in the case of persons. This means that while persons possess those properties properly studied by physics, chemistry, biology, and neuroscience, these alone cannot account fully for all the reality of persons. Persons cannot be completely explained in terms of or reduced to some more elemental kinds of realities – molecules, genes or neurons, for example. Instead persons can only properly be understood as emergent from combinations of these lower entities, and while dependent upon them for their continued existence, still persons possess unique, irreducible properties and capabilities.

The most important emergent feature of persons is that they possess “natural purposes” (43). These purposes flow from their distinctive natures, which emerge out of the lower levels of reality. Human natures manifest themselves in motivations that are the causes of their actions *qua* persons. Smith argues that there are the three kinds of motivation: beliefs, desires, and emotions (68). Chapter 5 expands that exploration by connecting motivations and goods: “Human motivations are thus closely tied to . . . certain natural, universal, basic goods” (180). He surveys over twenty-five prominent social scientists and philosophers who have offered accounts of basic human needs, interests, drives, or goods. He then offers a “thematic synthesis” of these diverse accounts, claiming that all can be synthesized into a single set of six, mutually irreducible basic goods (181-82):

1. Physical survival, security, and pleasure
2. Knowledge of reality
3. Identity coherence and affirmation
4. Exercising purposive agency
5. Moral affirmation
6. Social belonging and love

This set of basic goods constitutes a kind of “sociological periodic table” in terms of which all other accounts of motivations can be viewed as combinations or mixtures derived from this basic set (182).

From this synthesis, it follows that all persons are motivated to seek all

six of these basic goods. These goods are “natural, stable, and universal” (182). They are not “defined by society,” but are determined by the “natural ontological constitution” that all human beings carry with them into their social interactions. This also means that none of these basic goods can be properly understood as the “real” cause of the motivations for any of the others. Still, *how* these basic goods are pursued and even understood is culturally variable and mediated through “multiple modes of human particularity” (187, 182).

Yet the six basic goods do not exhaust the full scope of human motivation. Rather, they serve and are integrated by “the ultimate human purpose” of flourishing (202). “People’s motivations are ultimately traceable back to the basic human goods and interests that define and energize the human teleological quest for flourishing” (268). Flourishing succeeds when all six basic goods are realized, but more than this,

According to personalism . . . human beings should be understood as possessing the motivations and interests to ever more fully realize in their existence the fullness and flourishing of their personhood. . . . The purpose of persons is to develop and unfold our given personhood in ways that move us toward real personal excellence, thriving, flourishing . . . in Aristotle’s phrase, *eudaimonia* . . . life lived well. (52)

In chapter 6 Smith offers a sketch of a “theory of flourishing” that fleshes out some of the details of what a flourishing life would look like. This is necessarily provisional (or heuristic, to apply Lonergan’s favored term). Among other things, this chapter shows that the six basic goods and their corresponding motivations are integral to the pursuit of genuine flourishing. In particular, flourishing is never a finally achieved state, but a dynamic and developmental “life plan,” an “active journey” (219, 206). Persons develop their own particular ways of realizing those basic goods, but do so in ways that are dependent upon environments nourishing or impeding that development (218). “Flourishing is, of course, ultimately always a personal accomplishment for (or failure) of each human being. But . . . is [also] a collective project of humanity as a whole” (220). Smith identifies nine sets of natural and social preconditions that promote and sustain flourishing. By means of this sketch of flourishing, he casts new light upon the classical accounts of virtue as “hard-won dispositions and practices of excellence” (207).

Yet, says Smith, "Flourishing is not automatic, or guaranteed, but contingent" (223). In order to explain his point, he introduces a philosophical distinction of his own to show that having natural purposes and motivations, even when combined with social preconditions, do not completely determine what persons make of their lives. Distinguishing between what is real, what is actual, and what is empirical, he argues that really existing entities, including persons, have real natures, but that the natures await further actualization. For example, it is of the nature of an acorn is to develop into an oak tree, but that nature may or may not be actualized. Likewise some persons only gradually actualize their natures, while others can stagnate or even act in ways that betray and destroy their natures. Again, some actualities are also empirical, and can be directly observed, but this is not necessarily true of all realities. Causes and motivations, for example, can be both real and actual, even though they cannot be directly observed. Still, knowledge of their actuality is necessary to explain much that is empirically observed. For Smith the openness of critical realist personalism provides intellectual legitimacy to expanding the working concepts and methods of social science to include not only motivations, but the goods toward which motivations are oriented and which provide their real foundations.

Precisely because the natural motivations of human beings do not completely determine human actions, there remains the possibility of betraying one's call to flourish. Such betrayals result in a life that stagnates, or worse, that destroys itself as well as other persons and the natural world, and these phenomena also must be studied and explained to the extent possible by social science. In chapter 7, which is written in an especially compelling manner, Smith courageously confronts some of the most abhorrent facts of human behavior and history, drawing upon his positive account of flourishing to examine in detail the many negative ways in which it can be and has been perverted or destroyed. Beginning with the ways that environmental factors stifle human flourishing, Smith examines the increasingly dark manners in which human agency in combination with unjust social conditions bring about social evil. While indolence and sloth may not be all that bad, Smith observes that for anyone who has

already adapted to a life of stagnation, it is easy to take this next step away from flourishing toward destructiveness . . . in that sustained avoidance of one's personal flourishing inevitably requires diminishing

the flourishing of other persons. (226-27)

Smith traces the path of degeneration that follows, negligence into sadistic evil, illustrating how social scientific methods can be devised to properly take into account all these forms of evil. Yet far from proving that evil is a basic human motivation, he argues that human evil has a "parasitical dependence upon that which it corrupts," namely the ultimate human teleological orientation toward the good of flourishing (234).

In his conclusion, Smith expresses a puzzlement. Although love is integral to his definition of flourishing – "develop and sustain his or her own incommunicable self in loving relationships" – why is it that "Virtually no social scientist talks about love in their scholarly work" (277)? Love is a central fact of human existence and discussed constantly outside of social science, yet there is a kind of "weird, fearful allergic reaction" by social scientists to investigating love, as though this would not be "hard science." But the experiences and exercises of love are crucial to human flourishing, and the subtle and coldly overt betrayals of love are essential to any understanding of social evil. He concludes, therefore, with an exhortation that the reality as well as the denials of love be taken seriously by social scientists; otherwise social science cannot responsibly fulfill its search for fully adequate explanations of human social behavior.

COMPARISONS WITH LONERGAN

Much in Smith's book resonates with Lonergan's philosophy. Lonergan also thought of his philosophical approach as critical realism, and although there are some important differences between how he and Bhaskar understood that term, still there are many significant parallels and points of convergence between Lonergan and Smith.

Like Smith, Lonergan was deeply concerned about the genesis of a new approach to human science that would address the profound challenges presented by the progress and decline of humankind (*Insight*, 255-56). In fact his concern with a reinvigorated social science and its role in the reversal of decline dates from Lonergan's earliest unpublished writings from his student days.³

³See Bernard Lonergan, "Panton *Anakephalaiōsis*: The Restoration of All Things," *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 9, no. 2 (1991): 134-72.

He also agreed that more adequate and true human sciences would have to be grounded in a critical (and realist) philosophy: "In other words, human science cannot be merely empirical; it has to be critical; to reach a critical standpoint, it has to be normative. This is a tall order for human science as hitherto it has existed" (*Insight*, 261). He even anticipated some of the specifics of Smith's criticisms of Durkheim and Marx – for example, how their work dismissed important dimensions of the data on human behavior, and how it misdirected subsequent social scientific research and policy formation (*Insight*, 260). For Lonergan, the needed critical standpoint is a philosophical realism that begins with a critique (self-appropriation) of the unacknowledged assumptions about what human knowing is and is not. Self-appropriation expands what can be regarded as real by revealing the roles played by inquiries, insights, and "virtually unconditioned judgments" (which grasp "what is") in the actual but unexamined performances of human knowing. Lonergan's critique also unearths the subtle distinction between direct and inverse insights. This distinction in turn makes it possible to critically "distinguish between progress and decline, between the liberty that generates progress and the bias that generates decline" (*Insight*, 261).

Again as with Smith, emergence is central to Lonergan's critical realism. For Smith emergence is a process arising out of "the interactive combination" of lower entities, while for Lonergan emergence is a reality that comes out of the nonsystematic convergence of conditions giving to systematic schemes of recurrence. He fleshed out the implications of real emergence in his theory of "emergent probability" (*Insight*, 141-51). Further, for Lonergan just as for Smith, human beings are properly understood only in terms of their placement within this emergent world order.

The context of emergent probability includes another parallel with Smith's work. Smith holds that while human nature is "universal" it is "never expressed in a uniform manner" because individuals work out their unique ways of flourishing under the conditions in which they find themselves (218). Lonergan makes this point more generally, holding that "natures" ("explanatory conjugate forms") on all levels of reality including the human are inherently underdetermined. They depend upon preconditions supplied from beyond themselves to determine how they will be actualized (*Insight*, 70-76, 113-21).

This means that for Lonergan the novelty of emergences can arise within a given level of reality. For example, exclusively physical nonsystematic

processes can converge and set the conditions for new, purely physical schemes of recurrence (for example, the formation of the fusion cycles that make up stars). Likewise for Smith convergence of conditions can also lead to the emergence of real stratifications among entities with their "own particular characteristics and capacities" (Smith). For Lonergan, the science (for example, chemistry) of an ontologically lower class of entities proves "insufficient" when "it has to regard as merely coincidental what in fact is regular" at say the level of organisms (*Insight*, 281). This insufficiency signals the need for a higher, autonomous science (for example, biology) which in turn implies a new level of real, irreducible properties ("explanatory conjugate forms") belonging to and explanatory of the emergent things and their patterns of behavior.

Furthermore, Lonergan's critique of human knowing implies a plurality of heuristic methods to meet the challenges of correctly and scientifically understanding different levels of realities (*Insight*, 256, 260-61, 654). Not only did Lonergan identify four broad and distinct classes of heuristic methods in *Insight* (classical, statistical, genetic, and dialectical), but later in *Method in Theology* he added a refined and more differentiated account of the methods needed to address the diversities of human meanings and religions.

Smith's chapter on "Failure, Destruction, and Evil" places *privatio boni* squarely at the heart of his analysis. Lonergan likewise traces all instances of evil to privation: "all that intelligence can grasp with respect to basic sin is that there is no intelligibility to be grasped" (690). In his narration of the "longer cycle of decline," Lonergan presents only a brief sketch of the devastating consequences that follow, when, under the influence of biases, unintelligibility is willfully introduced into the order of things (*Insight*, 254-58). Smith's chapter fills out Lonergan's sketch with a richly articulated account of the many faces of evil, from the banal to the grotesque, and the "downward spiral" and "necrophilial 'syndrome of decay'" (264) that arise out of privation.

Finally, like Smith, Lonergan in his post-*Insight* work, assigns the highest place to love, both as the highest good sought by all human desire and motivation, and as the source of all nourishment of all authentic human living and all real healing of bias and evil.⁴

⁴See Bernard Lonergan, "Healing and Creating in History," in *A Third Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 100-109..

FURTHER QUESTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

The commonalities and complementarities between Smith and Lonergan abound. Still, Lonergan's work does prompt a few questions for further consideration. This concluding section raises four such questions: Exactly what kind of causality characterizes human motivations? What is the basis of Smith's affirmation of the reality of persons and human motivations? How universal are the six basic goods? And, does a purely humanistic sociology adequately account for all social facts?

First, then, over against prevailing biases in social science practice, Smith argues emphatically that motivations are real, causal, and explanatory of human social behavior. Lonergan would agree, as does this reviewer. But the question is just what kind of cause is a motivation? Smith seems to imply that motivations are efficient causes:

By "motivations" I mean the causal energy and direction the organized patterning of people's desires, beliefs, and emotions provide that *move people to choose, initiate and persist* in particular actions or general strategies in specific contexts (67, emphasis added).⁵

In other words, motivations cause people to choose (see also 272).

If this is really what Smith intends, then Lonergan and this reviewer would disagree. In *Insight* Lonergan surveys physical and biological causes, as well as the acts and contents of consciousness that precede the act of choosing. He argues forcefully that *none* of these necessitates an act of human choice. Human choice is radically free, a position he came to from his studies of Aquinas.⁶ Prior acts such as sensation, insight, desires, emotions, reflection, deliberation, and even virtually unconditioned judgments of value ("beliefs" in Smith's terminology) "specify" and inform the *content* of the choice that will be made, but they do not efficiently cause the *act* of

⁵There is no mention whatsoever of choice or its causal role in the discussion that follows Smith's definition of motivation (67-68).

⁶Bernard Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1 of the *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000). In this book Lonergan does identify an especially important Aristotelian influence upon Aquinas in this subject, but it does not have to do with the freedom of choice. There is nothing like this radicality of free choice in Aristotle. Augustine was the source of this aspect of Aquinas's thought.

choice to be made.⁷ Drawing upon more traditional terminology, I believe Lonergan would say that motivations are *formal* causes of choices, but *not* their *efficient* causes.⁸

To say that motivations are formal causes in no way diminishes their importance in an explanatory social science. Much of *Insight* is devoted to demonstrating that modern natural science is the search for, and the formulating of, explanations in terms of formal causes (properly understood), not efficient or material causes (see, for example, *Insight*, 101). Hence the role of motivations as formal causes in social science would be just as important as, say, the role of electrical charges in physics. Still, along with motivations, the radicality of free choice as efficient cause has also been obscured or denied in much of social science. (This is implicit in Smith's criticisms of "social situationism.") Therefore drawing attention to the radicality of free choice and distinguishing its causality from that of motivations would further advance objectives of Smith's book.

Second, what is the basis of Smith's strong affirmations of the reality of persons, causes, and motivations? While he draws heavily upon Bhaskar's critical realism, still his own affirmations of realism seem more *assumed* and exhorted than argued (for example, 32). Smith does invoke the principle of the "causal criterion of reality" (29) in support of his affirmation of the reality of persons, causes, and motivations, but this appeal is not very convincing.

Smith offers a somewhat more persuasive approach in support of critical realism throughout the book where he endeavors to show that "everyone in the social sciences operates with *some* ontology or other... Critical realism asks everyone to bring their operational ontological assumptions and models out into the open . . . and to subject them to the criticism of others" (22). In particular, he does much to reveal the weaknesses of positivist and social constructivist anti-realisms. But how convincing will this criticism be to those who are already committed to their own anti-realist assumptions?

⁷Lonergan's discussion in *Insight* of the prior specifications of choice fall roughly under what Smith labels "beliefs." It was only later in *Method in Theology* that Lonergan attended to the role played by feelings (desires and emotions) in arriving at values that inform choices. Yet Lonergan would still argue that feelings only specify choices. Even feelings are not the efficient causes that "move people to choose."

⁸Smith does hint at something like this in his chapter on "Failure, Destruction, and Evil" (261-63), but this distinction requires greater clarification and properly belongs in the earlier chapter on motivations.

Lonergan pushes the line of criticism to a deeper level. He asks every person to examine her or his own operational experiences of endeavoring to know anything. He argues that they will find themselves operating with a universal, cognitional structure, which has inescapable realist implications. It is each person's own actual cognitional performances, and not only the criticism of others, that will effectively indict their anti-realist assumptions (*Insight*, 410-15).

There is a slogan adopted by critical realists influenced by Bhaskar: "Start with the object of study, and it will tell you how to approach it." Fair enough. But if the reality of objects determine the proper methods to be applied in their study, we still have to ask, just how is the reality of objects first made known in order that proper methods can be developed and employed? If reality impinges on us in such a way that we know the reality of things, persons, causes, motives, goods, and emergence as real, still we have a responsibility to ask just how that happens. By what operations of consciousness is their reality made known?

It cannot happen by sensation alone, for that is the position of positivism and empiricism, which critical realism rightly rejects. The naïve realism of traditional scholasticism offered a similar answer in a somewhat modified form: there is a "direct intellectual vision of the concept of being" that accompanies every act of sensation. In a 1963 essay, Lonergan quoted Etienne Gilson as representative of that tradition: "How do you know a thing exists? [the] answer will always be by perceiving it." Gilson responded to the challenge issued by Kant with "the blunt reaffirmation of the dogmatic realism whose validity was denied by Kant's critique."⁹

Unlike Gilson's dogmatic assertion in the face of Kant, Lonergan took Kant's critical turn seriously. That is to say, he took up the prior question of the critique of knowing as a prolegomena to metaphysical claims about reality. But in doing so, he criticized Kant's account of knowing as a fallacious explanation of the conscious experiences of one's own activities of knowing.

Lonergan's alternative answer is that we come to know things, persons, causes, et cetera as real through the gift of wonder and the flood of inquiries, insights, and unconditioned judgments that issue from and satisfy wonder and inquiry. Reality is most immediate to us through our own questioning,

⁹Lonergan quoting Gilson, 196, in "Metaphysics as Horizon," in *Collection*, vol. 4 of the *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988).

and only indirectly through our sensing. All sensing is structured or patterned or "theory laden" in some way, and as such it is not derived immediately from reality. When wonder guides and structures the rest of our conscious activities, including the patterning of our sensations, these activities head for and attain knowledge of reality.¹⁰

This is Lonergan's version of critical realism. It is an approach that invites every person to take seriously the question, "What am I doing when I am knowing," to attend carefully to the overlooked role played by inquiry and questioning, and to discover the sophisticated realism that is implied by this self-appropriation. It is a realism that is neither merely assumed nor dogmatically asserted (as with Gilson). For these reasons I believe that Smith's affirmation to realism can be strengthened in an important way by Lonergan's approach to critical realism.

Third, we may ask just how universal are the six "basic goods" that Smith identifies. Smith arrives at his list on the basis of the "*numerous substantive agreements and thematic repetitions across*" the many accounts of basic needs, drives, and goods that he surveyed (175). While I personally find much merit in his synthesis, still it is vulnerable to a challenge that it may be subtly biased by Western culture. For example, "identity coherence" and "agency" do not seem obviously culturally invariant, although they are clearly goods that play crucial roles for the flourishing of persons living in Western cultural settings. But even if these six basic goods can be shown to be truly transcultural, there is another difficulty with Smith's synthesis, namely, that he has not actually delivered on one of his stated objectives in this chapter. That is to say, he has derived his list of basic goods from the work of others. But he has not shown that "the real ontology of human personhood is what defines the natural, basic, human goods and interests" (183).

In place of a specific list of basic human goods, Lonergan identifies an invariant structure of the human good, and an invariant process by means of which actual goods are realized in accordance with the given environmental, social, and biographical conditions. Both the structure and the process are rooted in the invariant structure of human knowing, valuing, choosing, and acting, although Smith's list of basic goods fleshes out many of the

¹⁰Bernard Lonergan "Cognitive Structure," in *Collection*, vol. 4 of the *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 218.

particularities that will most likely result from the exercise of that process in the most common situations human beings do encounter.¹¹ Again, Lonergan's account of the invariant structure of the human good explicitly includes social goods such as human skills, institutions, liberty, and development. While Smith does not explicitly include these goods in his list, he does treat them all implicitly in various ways throughout his book. While I believe that Lonergan's discussion of the good would benefit a great deal by the addition of the specifics of Smith's analysis, I would also argue that Smith's approach would be profitably expanded by incorporating Lonergan's account of the process and the structure in which the human good is realized.

Finally, are social sciences revised along the lines that Smith proposes truly capable of producing a comprehensive explanation of human social behavior? There is one very noteworthy section of the book that points to the need for something beyond even the impressive "thick, rich, and realistic notion" (266) of what a social science can be that Smith has set forth. In the chapter in which Smith elaborates his theory of flourishing, he writes: "In wretched circumstances, human persons can sometimes nonetheless strive to carry on with expressions of dignity and love." He illustrates this point with references to stories of acts of kindness and courage in Nazi concentration camps, as well as similar extraordinary acts in less drastic conditions (216-17). Can a humanistic social science, even as enriched in the ways that Smith envisions, do explanatory justice to such human actions? Such actions seem ultimately inexplicable if one relies solely on the lengthy section that immediately precedes Smith's mention of these remarkable acts. There he carefully articulates the kinds of conditions that are needed in order for human persons to flourish to the full, and the kinds of conditions that will stifle or destroy flourishing (209-16). That analysis is predicated on the reality of human persons and their natural motivations, but we may ask whether or not there are realities beyond these that need to be invoked in order to fully explain such actions. In *Insight*, Lonergan spoke of an expanded, "theologically transformed" method of interpretation that would supplement the approaches human science and ethics that Smith's humanistic critical realism could envision (*Insight*, 762; see also 745-47),

¹¹Lonergan himself did not explicitly elaborate the process, nor did he offer an explicit derivation of the invariance of the structure of the human good. Both however are implicit in Lonergan's work. For an effort to make explicit what is only implicit in Lonergan, see Patrick H. Byrne, *The Ethics of Discernment: Lonergan's Foundations for Ethics*, especially chapters 4 and 12, forthcoming, University of Toronto Press.

and his *Method in Theology* was developed to meet the challenge of such explanations. Is there perhaps also a need for "theologically transformed" social sciences that take seriously grace as a supernatural reality capable of empowering people to draw good out of evil? I believe Smith is open to such a possibility. But his book has already posed very profound challenges to the deeply entrenched and prevailing methods of social science. His proposals will face stiff resistance, which would only be hardened still further by any mention of the need to consider this further transcendent reality. Still, it is important to take note of this question for future reference, given Smith's proper insistence that all data and realities call for explanation in social science.

Let me conclude by expressing my appreciation for the achievement of Smith's *To Flourish or Destruct?* along with my hope that through his expositions of oversights and alternative approaches, his work will begin to enrich the practices of social science.

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A RESPONSE

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IN THE FALL of 1983, I registered for a graduate seminar in systematic theology at Boston College that was to be taught by a professor named Bernard Lonergan. I had just graduated from Gordon College on the north shore of Boston the spring before, was a new MTS student at Harvard Divinity School, and was dabbling in courses offered through the Boston Theological Institute consortium. A theology Ph.D student friend told me that Lonergan was famous so I should take his course. The first class meeting was at the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, if I recall correctly, and, although we students showed up eagerly around the seminar table, the professor never arrived. Shortly thereafter we were told that he was struggling with health problems and that the course was canceled. One year later, Lonergan died in his native Canada, although I did not know that at the time. I had come, without realizing it then, within a hair's breadth of being introduced to Lonergan and critical realism. The next year I switched out of divinity school to study sociology. It then took me thirty years of wrestling with problematic philosophies and practices of social science before I finally and happily stumbled directly upon critical realism for myself, through the work of Roy Bhaskar and Margaret Archer. Looking back now, I wonder how different my intellectual life might have turned out had I had the chance to learn from Lonergan. But that was not to be.

What a surprise it was then, when, more than thirty years after my first systematic theology course was canceled, I was contacted by R. J. Snell, one of this journal's editors, and asked if I would participate in a review symposium of my book, *What Is a Person?*, on the grounds that my own approach seemed to closely articulate with that of Lonergan's. Having come within a hair's breadth of Lonergan in 1983, which might have just as well

been endless miles, life somehow circled me back again to Lonergan in 2015. And so here I am, engaging five thoughtful papers on Lonergan's and my critical realisms. I am grateful to Snell and my respondents for the in-depth attention to my book, and I hope that our exchange here advances fruitful understanding among all of us.

What I have most clearly learned from my respondents is the following. The ideas of Bernard Lonergan and Roy Bhaskar developed independently of each other, but they seem to reflect strong parallels, shared sensibilities, and deep commitments that promise to help us escape some of the intellectual messes in which many of us moderns have gotten ourselves. That is intriguing. Those of us who follow in their respective intellectual traditions may, it seems, have much to learn from the thought of the other. In particular, I take it from my respondents that Lonergan offers a *method* for proceeding in our analyses that could be of particular use to us Bhaskarian critical realists. While reading these papers, I thought how marvelous it would be to somehow arrange for a sustained encounter and face-to-face dialogue between the persons of Lonergan and Bhaskar – what an exciting and stimulating event that would be! But since that is not possible, it seems to fall to us to carry on some approximation of that exchange, which, again, is what makes this symposium so appealing.

I am in particular interested in the argument by Gilles Mongeau that my own approach could be strengthened by an account taking an explanatory perspective linked to Lonergan's scale of values, involving a shift from a functionally positional to a more explicitly positional stance. Knowing as little of Lonergan as I do, I have only a slight idea of what this might mean. But the suggestions seem promising. While writing my book's chapters on the good and human dignity, I was aware of how exploratory and tentative my argument was. And so I welcome any help to better ground, correct, and strengthen my ideas. Likewise, I am interested in Thomas McPartland and Michael McCarthy's suggestions that my approach to phenomenology could be improved upon by taking Lonergan seriously on the matter. Beyond that, I have not much constructive to say. I do, however, have two critical clarifications to offer.

First, my impression reading Elizabeth Murray's critique of Roy Bhaskar's critical realism, and by implication my own, is that she does not understand it sufficiently for her critiques to stick. I do not recognize the Bhaskar she describes. For anyone familiar with even part of Bhaskar's

corpus, the idea that his critical realism is naïve, dogmatic, pre-critical, pre-Kantian, non-transcendental, empiricist in its view of objectivity, and skirting epistemological questions is strange indeed. I note that Murray's criticism of Bhaskar centers entirely on his 1975 book, *A Realist Theory of Science*. But that was only the start of a massive body of work developing over forty years a robust and sophisticated critical realist philosophy. Criticizing Bhaskar based on that book alone is like dismissing the teachings of apostolic Christianity on a reading of the one New Testament book, The Acts of the Apostles. Certain of Murray's characterizations of Bhaskar's critical realism also simply misunderstand some of its basic terms. For example, she writes that "he claims that events are not a part of the real; they are only actual, not real or experienced." Well, in fact, the real, actual, and empirical are not mutually exclusive but properly understood as nested, so that the empirical is part of the actual, which is in turn part of but not exhaustive of the real. And that difference has important consequences. Or take Murray's criticism of Bhaskar's allegedly "commonsense" view of "critical" as simply the critique of positivistic realism. In fact, the "critical" in Bhaskar's critical realism is multivalent, referring not only to critiques of other philosophies of science but also to science's inherent critique of false ideas and unjust social orders, to its fallibilist epistemology, to its own self-critical posture, and more. Or to Murray's description of Bhaskar's view that "science... requires a reality that is completely independent of the subject" implying that "objectivity can only be attained by bypassing the human mind," I must say that this is not Bhaskar's position, nor mine. Our critical realism fully entails the necessity of "personal knowledge" of a Polanyian kind and the incorporation of an intelligent version of the epistemic perspectivalism of postmodernism. Indeed, Bhaskar and my critical realism are absolutely clear that all scientific knowledge is "conceptually mediated," entailing an irreducibly humanly subjective character of all knowing and rejecting any strong sense of science as being "objective." That itself is possible without losing the idea of truth because of Bhaskar's crucial distinction between the "intransitive" nature of that about which science has knowledge versus the "transitive" nature of the scientific knowledge itself – which then enables a full recognition of the complete human involvement in the process of knowing without that collapsing into strong post-Kantian constructivisms. Now, perhaps in all of this, not being a philosopher nor much familiar (yet) with Longergan's thought, I have missed something important here that in

due time I will better understand. I will be happy to be enlightened. But for now it seems to me that Murray is working with an incomplete and inaccurate understanding of Bhaskar's critical realism that prevents her from offering the kind of fully generative intellectual engagement that this symposium was intending to produce.

I have a similar response to the arguments of Patrick Baert, who Christopher Friel uses as a foil with which to engage the critical realism of Bhaskar and myself, even though I take no issue with Friel's position generally. I think Baert has not taken Bhaskar's critical realism adequately seriously on its own terms. Instead, he seems to me to characterize Bhaskar's critical realism in a way that is less fair to realism than instrumentally serving his larger argumentative purposes. Baert is a neo-pragmatist of the sort influenced by Richard Rorty and John Dewey. Pragmatism is also a strong influence in American sociology, particularly in the field of social theory, and the relationship between critical realism and pragmatism stands begging for a smart analysis of its shared commitments and differences. Such an analysis will show that, in the end, realism (and I think any reasonable account of science) cannot avoid working with some intelligent version of a correspondence theory of truth, which Rorty rejects. But Rorty was wrong in this, I think, and recent works in philosophy (for example, Gerald Vision, *Veritas: The Correspondence Theory and Its Critics* [Cambridge, MA: MIT/Bradford Books, 2004]) suggest the same. Interestingly, Baert also studied at Oxford under Rom Harré, who was also Roy Bhaskar's thesis advisor and collaborator in the early days of critical realism (especially in thinking about the "natural necessity" of causal powers, although some say that Roy taught Rom more at the time than the reverse), but who later backslid (from an "orthodox" realist perspective) into too strong of a constructivist position. One wonders how conversations with Harré may have shaped Baert's view of critical realism, such as it is. In any case, I do not think Baert gets critical realism quite right, particularly on the question of its lack of "reflection of the second order." His claim that "realists fail to acknowledge people's ability to stand back from structures, and to develop discursive knowledge from previously tacit rules and assumptions" is rubbish. Bhaskar not only knew this but clearly built it into his theoretical system. Not to mention that Margaret Archer, a close collaborator of Bhaskar and foremost theorist of critical realism in her own right, has spent years developing exactly the theme about which Baert complains, with titles like, *Being Human: The*

Problem of Agency (2001), *Structure, Agency, and the Internal Conversation* (2003), *Making Our Way through the World: Human Reflexivity and Social Mobility* (2007), *The Reflexive Imperative in Late Modernity* (2012), and *Conversations about Reflexivity* (2013). In short, Patrick Baert has not gotten critical realism right, so while he presents an interesting foil for engaging certain questions, I do not find myself much compelled to rethink Bhaskar's or my position to answer his charges. Rather, I think Baert needs more honestly to consider critical realism on its own terms. That said, Friel's larger point is well taken, namely, that Lonergan may have proposed a particular account of social ontology that stands to modify in a helpful way my own position vis-à-vis method.

Beyond offering these rather broadly appreciative and, in a few specific cases, skeptical remarks, I find myself limited, because of my lack of close familiarity with Lonergan's critical realism, in my capacity to respond in depth to the arguments of my respondents. But that itself reflects the larger condition and promise underlying and motivating this symposium, namely, that Lonerganian and Bhaskarian critical realists seem to have much to learn from each other in ways that could prove quite helpful. I am grateful that Lonergan scholars have so seriously engaged my books, *What Is a Person?* and *To Flourish or Destruct*. And I hope that this exchange will help to open up the intellectual world of Lonergan's critical realism to the many of us who have been influenced by Roy Bhaskar.