

After Theory:

A Commonsense Approach to Interiority

Eric Morelli

Emory University

Revised: October 28, 2012

*1. Step Away from the Edge!*

This is the fourth annual Lonergan on the Edge conference at Marquette, the fortieth year since the publication of *Method in Theology*, and the fifty-fifth year since the publication of *Insight*. Are we still on the edge? In a sense everyone is always on the edge, and getting that makes you edgy. Usually, though, an edge is something you are on in transition and then back off or cross over. The longer you are on it, the more reason you have to reflect. Lonergan deemed his theory of the virtually unconditioned in judgment his main contribution to the history of philosophy and asserted we were on the verge of an age of interiority.<sup>1</sup> Judgment and interiority share an edge.

Judgment interiorizes. Exteriors cannot be present to me unless I am present to myself,<sup>2</sup> but I could observe and understand just exteriors. Yet if I want to judge them, I need to consider my observing, understanding, and judging. Judging involves the reflective act of understanding I have or have not correctly understood what I observed—that I have paid close enough attention,

---

<sup>1</sup> For Lonergan's view of the importance of his theory of judgment, see Mark D. Morelli and Elizabeth A. Morelli, eds., *The Lonergan Reader* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 162 and Mark D. Morelli, "The Realist Response to Idealism in England and Lonergan's Critical Realism" in *Method*, vol. 21, 1 (2003), 1-23: 13 n. 29. For Lonergan's assertion that we are on the verge of an age of interiority, see Bernard Lonergan, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, Volume 22: Early Works on Theological Method 1*, eds. Robert M. Doran and Robert C. Croken (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 76 (hereafter, *CWL 22*) and Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 96 (hereafter, *MIT*).

<sup>2</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, Volume 3: Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 345-6 (hereafter *CWL 3*); Bernard Lonergan, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, Volume 5: Understanding and Being: The Halifax Lectures on Insight*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., eds. Elizabeth A. Morelli and Mark D. Morelli (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 15-16; and *CWL 22*, 278-9 and 287.

been intelligent, asked the right questions, have been and am in the intellectual pattern.<sup>3</sup> A lot of the evidence for any judgment is interior.

So my judging reflects on me. Lonergan emphasizes the personal nature of judgment in the lectures on theological method at Regis College: “This absolute positing is a personal act, an act of one’s personal intellectual probity. It is not strictly moral, because ‘moral’ involves the will. But there is a type of morality of the intellect itself, and that is involved in the judgment.”<sup>4</sup> He recalls de La Rochefoucauld’s maxim that “everyone complains about his memory but no one about his judgment.”<sup>5</sup> People also can be ready and proud to admit they are not theoretically-minded. It is judgment that puts my intellectual morality on the line.

A respect for fact is a mark of personal depth. The judgmental obviously lack interiority, but they evade judgment by outsourcing it to authority, fashion, intuition, or conceptualistic criteriology.<sup>6</sup> The commitment to truth involves an openness to the unique demands of each question for judgment and to the constant and conscious variability of the quality of one’s knowing. Lonergan rejects attempts to circumvent the personal dimension of judgment with a “merely automatic...mechanical method”: “There is a personal element of responsibility, of self-commitment to the exigences of truth, that is involved in every judgment. That element of self-commitment is not something that is settled merely by any extrinsicist approach to the problems of knowledge or science.”<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> *CWL* 3, 300, 309-12 and 404-5.

<sup>4</sup> *CWL* 22, 97. Also see *CWL* 3, 297, 299 and 302.

<sup>5</sup> *CWL* 22, 97. Also see *CWL* 3, 297.

<sup>6</sup> Being judgmental seems to be a type of extrinsicism, of which there are “many manifestations,” that, paradoxically, evades the responsibility of judging by judging too readily—often, it seems, by judging on the basis, not of an interest in discovering truth, but of an interest in identifying falsehoods guided primarily by a concept of the appearance of falsehood, secondarily by a concept of the appearance of truth (*CWL* 22, 108-9 and 115).

<sup>7</sup> *CWL* 22, 98. Also see *CWL* 22, 425-6: “If you think of method, as Gadamer seems to do in his *Wahrheit und Methode*, as simply a set of rules that can be followed blindly by anyone, then method in that sense is, of course, the method of the assembly line, the method of the New Method Laundry.”

Any reasonable judgment is a solution to the problem of knowledge. Talk about *the problem of knowledge* is a bit too conceptualistic. There are as many problems of knowledge and solutions to them as there are genuine questions and answers for judgment. When I know anything, I know that I know it and implicitly know that I know.<sup>8</sup> Even a reasonable denial is an implicit affirmation of my knowing. This judgment brings me to interiority.

Interiority is one of five realms of meaning, horizons, or worlds through which consciousness moves in the course of its self-differentiation.<sup>9</sup> Each world is a field of objects correlated with an operational habit.<sup>10</sup> An operational habit is an acquired habit, but unlike the traditional abstract metaphysical concept of habit, especially the Scholastic concept of operative habit, which denotes a habit acquired by a discrete potency through its operation that then stands to its operation as first to second act, an operational habit may be the acquisition of an operator as a whole person or the collective acquisition of a group of operators and stands to an operation as a combination of differentiated operations, group of such combinations, or group of such groups to an operation.<sup>11</sup>

In his accounts of the differentiation of consciousness, Lonergan sometimes skips the first world, the world of immediacy, and begins with the world of common sense. From there, he often seems to have in mind a diagram like the one he drew in 1963 [Diagram 1].<sup>12</sup> This [Diagram 2] is a translated and clarified version courtesy of Mark Morelli. The diagram captures

---

<sup>8</sup> *CWL* 3, 353, 360-2 and 366.

<sup>9</sup> Throughout the following account of the differentiation of consciousness, I draw from several of Lonergan's accounts of the process: *CWL* 22, 4, 43-53, 56-67, 136-41, 266, 283-4, 479-80, 531-3, 537-41 and 592 and *MIT* 71-3, 81-99, 107, 114-5, 257-62, 265-6, 272-6, 286-7 and 302-5.

<sup>10</sup> *CWL* 22, 13 and 60.

<sup>11</sup> *CWL* 22, 7 and Bernard Lonergan, *De circulo operationum*, 48800DTL050/A488, [www.bernardlonergan.com](http://www.bernardlonergan.com).

<sup>12</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Theologia: proprium principium, obiectum*, 54700D0L060/A547, [www.bernardlonergan.com](http://www.bernardlonergan.com).

Notes in brackets refer to frames and the audio excerpt and transcript of the accompanying movie. Each frame lasts two seconds. To watch the movie so it plays with the text as intended, begin by pausing it on the title frame and then, at each bracketed note, play it to advance it a frame and pause it on the new frame. The audio excerpt and transcript can be played right through.

several aspects of the process but has deficiencies and is devoted mainly to representing the mediation of religious consciousness.

Through the exercise of my natural, spontaneous operational habit, I develop new habits. Undifferentiated subjective-objective experience accrues, insights into undifferentiated experiential conjugates accumulate,<sup>13</sup> and with the acquisition of a common language, I begin mediating immediacy and piecing together a commonsense world (1). I develop incomplete nests of insights into experiential conjugates that anticipate the intelligent operation of particular operators with experiences like mine in particular situations like those I have faced. I devise *ad hoc* solutions to common problems, know what I mean, and can explain myself to others in my community in colloquial terms. I cannot say exactly what I mean or handle complex, long-term problems, but the demands that I do move me only to the extent I somehow recognize them for what they are—insofar as I am already inwardly compelled to achieve a higher control, to find *the* solutions, to answer precisely once and for all what, why, and how to anyone who may want to know. The systematic exigence (12) takes me from my world of common sense to a world of theory (2).

The world of common sense is the external world, the world of community, of particular persons, things, and situations, of concrete living and historical process. It changes with time and place. The world of theory, by contrast, is the world of all merely possible worlds and is as timeless and lifeless as possible. Gradually, my adherence to the systematic exigence eliminates ambiguity. It sheds the reference to and overcomes the reliance on common experience, particular intelligent operators, and their supplemental insights into concrete situations by shifting from descriptive relations and experiential conjugates to explanatory relations and

---

<sup>13</sup> *CWL* 3, 102-5 and 196-204.

explanatory conjugates and by full statements and rigorous logics.<sup>14</sup> It leads to a new, technical language in which as many terms as possible are defined and, in the limit, all are defined on the basis of a fundamental set of terms and relations that define each other—a great achievement but still only theoretical and blatantly so, as Lonergan puts it in his 1968 lectures on theological method at Boston College, “a basic vicious circle.”<sup>15</sup>

The differentiation of common sense and theory creates a problem of integration: an exterior division for common sense and an interior fragmentation of the theorist’s life illustrated well, as Lonergan points out, in Plato’s early dialogues and by the story of Thales encounter with the milkmaid and subsequent attempt to save face by speculating in grape futures. What do the different realms of meaning mean? How do they coexist and relate? The emergence of this problem and the desire to solve it, the critical exigence (23), takes us from theory to interiority (3).

In the diagram Lonergan identifies the problem of integration as 3°2, a line that leads from interiority (3) to common sense (1) but that breaks at an unlabeled point (°) to head back to theory (2). However, in his accounts of consciousness’s differentiation, he refers to a problem of integration arising from the differentiation of common sense and theory. 3°2 is a fully understood and formulated problem of integration put up for a considered solution, namely, “not in many spheres at the same time—a free oscillation=integration.”<sup>16</sup> To formulate the problem fully and to propose a solution, one must have passed beyond theory, settled into interiority, and returned to theory to work out the details of interiority. Before the well-formulated problem

---

<sup>14</sup> *CWL* 3, 102-5.

<sup>15</sup> *CWL* 22, 427.

<sup>16</sup> *Theologia: proprium principium, obiectum*. In his Regis lectures, Lonergan considers a range of possible responses to the problem of integration: omission, simplification, oscillation, and transposition (*CWL* 22, 64-7). Lonergan opts for oscillation as the most realistic solution but at times seems to go further than this and imply it is the necessary solution (*CWL* 22, 42-3, 315 and 319).

proposed for a well-formulated solution, there is the problem as it first appears to those who do not have the terms to formulate it or the means to put it in its proper context—the felt demand for another, higher control of life and meaning that just exceeds one’s present habit of meaning.

Where did Eddington lay his cards when he admitted his confusion over his two tables?<sup>17</sup> To whom did Sellars imagine he addressed his essay on the manifest and scientific images of man?<sup>18</sup>

Commonsensical and theoretical operators stumble upon themselves into the world of interiority—the world of all factual worlds, operators, and operational habits—the field of the subject, consciousness, and method taken now as objects, not the objects of commonsensical or theoretical operations, but the subject as subject as object, consciousness as my present heightened awareness, and method as the way I spontaneously and consciously tend to operate effectively, the way I cannot help but operate if I operate at all—my natural and transcendental operational habit.

The particular operator returns from theoretical exile with a new significance. My transition into interiority is mediated, at least implicitly, by my recognition of the fact that my operating is the common factor uniting my worlds and somehow the key to their differentiation and integration. The lived problem of integration is the dawning of my vague recognition of my integral role as operator—my self-affirmation as an operator—and an introduction to interiority. My solution to the problem of integration—my self-affirmation as an operator who knows and knows in specialized ways that correspond to the worlds of common sense, theory, and interiority—brings me fully into interiority. Like common sense and theory, interiority has its own language. It may sound like theory or common sense, but it is neither. It is “a complex use

---

<sup>17</sup> Arthur Eddington, *The Nature of the Physical World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928), xi-xix.

<sup>18</sup> Wilfrid Sellars, “Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man” in *Frontiers of Science and Philosophy*, ed. Robert Colodny (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1962): 35-78.

of familiar words”<sup>19</sup>—a language with terms that refer to the operations and relations between operations that I in fact experience myself performing.

While the habits of immediacy and common sense revolve around experiential operations and the habit of theory revolves around intellectual operations, the habit of interiority revolves around judgment. As a habit of operations, each involves the whole transcendental habit. Each operation is ideally the result of experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding. Each has this normative requirement. Each occurs in response to an exigence, but again the exigences are moments in the unfolding of one transcendental notion—the desire for knowledge, the good, God.<sup>20</sup> Every exigence and every level of consciousness is active in every world. Commonsensical and theoretical operators experience, understand, judge, and decide. The systematic exigence is at work already in commonsense naming.<sup>21</sup> The critical exigence is at work in the self-correction of common sense and theory. Nevertheless, the levels and exigences are distinct.<sup>22</sup> The difference is in the emphasis on an operation, in the adherence to an exigence, in specialization.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> *MIT*, 276.

<sup>20</sup> “Fundamentally, there is just one single thrust of the human spirit that unfolds. As it unfolds, it reveals these successive levels. We aim at what is good. To know the good we have to know the real; to know the real we have to know the true; to know the true we have to understand; to understand we have to attend to the data. These transcendental notions are intimately connected; they seem to be just simple variations on a fundamental theme” (*CWL* 22, 435).

<sup>21</sup> “The real significance of the name is that it is the human achievement that brings conscious intentionality into sharp focus. When you can name it, your effort at apprehension comes to a sharp focus, it fixes on something definite. That is the key step in human consciousness setting about the double task of ordering one’s world and orienting oneself within it. Insofar as one has names, one can do that with a precision and a clarity that otherwise is not attainable” (*CWL* 22, 530).

<sup>22</sup> “These operations, then, are distinct, they recur, they are related. It is inquiry that transforms mere experiencing into observation. If you have a precise question that you are asking, you begin to attend to the data in a more specific fashion simply because you are inquiring. Similarly, your observations will move into your descriptive categories. The descriptions give rise to conflicts or apparent conflicts, and then you get problems. The problems sooner or later lead on to discoveries. The discoveries are formulated in hypotheses, the hypotheses have to be formulated with great accuracy, all their presuppositions clarified and all their implications worked out. Doing that suggests possible experiments that would test the hypothesis. All these operations, then, are related to one another; one leads into the other” (*CWL* 22, 425).

<sup>23</sup> *CWL* 22, 44-5, 50 and 61.

We can distinguish partial or generic and full or proper interiorities—discovered and settled worlds, habits that are merely a combination of operations and those that form a totality or group. In the diagram Lonergan puts “Hegel” in parentheses after “world of interiority” despite the fact that in his view Hegel did not develop and affirm an adequate cognitional theory. In the Regis lectures, he admits that the recognition that there has been an eclipse of theory puts one “in rather queer company.”<sup>24</sup> In *Method* he traces the turn to interiority back to Descartes.<sup>25</sup> But in his Regis lectures he explains that, while he could say “subjectivity” instead of “interiority,” most who speak of “subjectivity” have an unresolved problem of judgment,<sup>26</sup> and in *Method* he insists that interiority is attained through the affirmation and appropriation of an adequate cognitional theory.<sup>27</sup> Those who adhere to the critical exigence and commit themselves in judging thereby implicitly affirming their knowing and those who acknowledge a problem of integration and turn inward in an attempt to solve it thereby implicitly affirming their integral role as operators achieve a partial, generic interiority. But full, proper interiority is the result of a specialized adherence to the critical exigence that sees it through to the end. Full interiority is based on and organized around the affirmation of an adequate cognitional theory. It is centered on the core of every judgment, the solution to the problem of integration, the explicit judgment that I operate in a particular way, that this way is knowing, that the habits of common sense, theory, and interiority are specializations of my knowing, and that their correlative worlds can be but are not always true apprehensions of one multifaceted real world.

In 1962 at Regis College Lonergan noted the eclipse of the world of theory and new tendencies toward interiority, specifically tendencies that “unite the world of interiority and the

---

<sup>24</sup> *CWL* 22, 77.

<sup>25</sup> *MIT*, 316.

<sup>26</sup> *CWL* 22, 268-9 and 287.

<sup>27</sup> *MIT*, 83-4.



external world of common sense to skip all this theoretical junk that no one understands anyway.”<sup>28</sup> In 1972 in *Method* he distinguished three stages of history and placed us in the third in which common sense and theory coexist, create a problem of integration, and prompt a turn to interiority. Are we still on the edge of a critical and interior age?

Lonergan sought to rise to the level of his times, to assimilate history’s genius, to meet the problems of the day. We can try the same now. Full interiority is mediated by a cognitional theory. We can move off the edge and further into interiority, attempt a more accurate cognitional theory of interiority. Particularly, we can focus on judgment or go beyond judgment to work out a more complete and accurate theory of deliberating and deciding. Lonergan has the methodical exigence (3°1) leading from interiority to common sense but breaking off as the problem of integration in relation to theory and as the differentiation of consciousness in relation to the sacred differentiation. Here, the diagram gets very complicated apparently because of its specific focus and avoidance of many other complications. Some of the lines are exigences while others are mediations. Lonergan chooses to speak in terms of mediations, in part, because of how generic and potentially concrete the term is and also because it captures the particular sort of relation according to which a “one development, by its co-presence with another, produces a modification in the other.”<sup>29</sup> Lonergan’s focus is on the differentiation of religious consciousness. 4 is not the world of the sacred or the world of transcendence, the fourth world in his accounts of the differentiation of consciousness, but the “differentiation of the sacred mediated by 1, 2, 3.” He has lines of mediation going from every other world to 4. Because this is a diagram of a single consciousness, however, lines of mediation could be drawn in every direction. In this diagram [Diagram 3] I have gone to some length depicting the mediation of

---

<sup>28</sup> *CWL* 22, 76.

<sup>29</sup> *CWL* 22, 53. See also *CWL* 22, 54-55 and 59-60.

worlds, the genetic circle<sup>30</sup> of exigences, the mediations, and their interrelations. You see it could get more complex, and we could use another world in the upper left. The exigences direct the mediative dynamism, and it seems that the methodical exigence also could lead from interiority to theory and the sacred. Perhaps, this is what is symbolized by the unlabeled dot in Lonergan's diagram. In any case, we could follow Lonergan on to a further edge. In addition to presenting his theory of judgment and attempting to cultivate interiority, he indicated the nature of explicit metaphysics and derived and outlined a methodical organization of theology and the human sciences. We could push beyond interiority to mediate common sense, theory, and the sacred interiorly, or we could move from this theoretic-interior mode to the actual action itself. The methodical exigence and interior mediation may also signify the methodical engagement in worlds. And beyond the cognitive self-transcendence of judgment is the real or moral self-transcendence of decision and action, beyond the world of interiority is the world of transcendence, of risking loving action in cooperation with God and God's cooperators, hoping for good results, and humbly acknowledging and obediently dealing with actual results.

But how well can we collaborate without collaborators, and how far can we get by ourselves if we are operating in an exteriorizing culture? Interiority is at least as extensive as

---

<sup>30</sup> "That circle—the systematic exigence, the critical exigence, and the methodical exigence—is also a genetic process. One lives first of all in the world of community and then learns a bit of science and then reflects, is drive towards interiority to understand precisely what one is doing in science and how it stands to one's operations in the world of community. And that genetic process does not occur once. It occurs over and over again. One gets a certain grasp of science and is led on to certain points in the world of interiority. One finds that one has not go hold of everything, gets hold of something more, and so on. It is a process of spiraling upwards to an ever fuller view. That circle—systematic, critical, and methodical exigence—does not occur just once. It occurs over and over again in the self-correcting process of learning" (*CWL* 22, 140).

theory.<sup>31</sup> Like science, it is a collective habit, the possession of many. There must be an interior society if the habit of interiority is to develop.<sup>32</sup>

This is not an interior age, an age judgment. We show signs of still being on the same edge and, of not only being on it, but of having dwelt on it too long. We have seen through theory but not beyond it. Theory is history. Everyone knows it is just a hypothesis. But there has not been a general recognition of judgment. The force of the critical exigence has been redirected.

Modernism, critical of tradition but failing to achieve a critical realism, broke ties with itself, reidentified as postmodernism, and now seems to have reidentified as posthumanism.<sup>33</sup> Impressed by the force of cultural and historical difference as negative evidence, it rejected classicist foundations and sought a replacement in experience, then in understanding, then in different combinations of the two, and then in decision and action. We have had schematism, sublation, will, choice, reification, praxis, resolution, and the event. The last comes rather close to judgment. It seems to be the experience of the appearance of negative evidence, a properly judicative experience, but it is analyzed in terms of an old understanding breaking down in the face of new experience or a new understanding emerging from experience. Judgment is not some combination of experience and understanding but a positive third—a testing and absolute positing. The recent turn to late Heidegger and posthumanism signals a new romantic materialism and a repetition of the modern emphasis on the critical import of the empirical differences of time, culture, gender, and identity—a Feuerbach or Marx for the Hegel of early

---

<sup>31</sup> “One gets a certain grasp of science and is led on to certain points in the world of interiority. One finds that one has not got hold of everything, gets hold of something more, and so on” (*CWL* 22, 140).

<sup>32</sup> On science as a collective habit, see *CWL* 22, 472. For suggestions that the case is similar with respect to interiority, see *CWL* 22, 423-4.

<sup>33</sup> See Cary Wolfe, *What Is Posthumanism?* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010) and Donna J. Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991).

Heidegger or Sartre's humanism. It is the same project Descartes embarrassingly inaugurated, now focused specifically on overcoming classicist self-centeredness, and yet simultaneously post-ironically interested in giving itself and its inheritors all another name.

While relativism rules in academia as respect for diversity and an interdisciplinarity that eliminates the differentiation of disciplines is promoted as the solution to rather than the problem of their integration—universities are administered in the cold light of economic fact; technical, community, and for-profit colleges attract students interested in mastering marketable skills; CNN, whose objectivity consists in allotting equal time to antagonistically subjective speakers, is thought to be losing in the ratings war with Fox News and its rival MSNBC because of its failure to take sides,<sup>34</sup> and Simon Cowell and Gordon Ramsay have built international fame and fortune by judging brutally and, in Cowell's case, by giving everyone at home a chance to do the same.<sup>35</sup> Becoming a judge has become the has-been's return ticket to stardom.<sup>36</sup>

Interiority's case is analogous. Philosophy committed suicide in the second half of the last century and in its own wake fell prey to personality, big names preaching the insignificance of names, amassing imitators, and collecting big checks. It pursued "the interesting" and "the sexy" and fled "the passé" and "the indecent." There were approximately two ways of going about it determined by the idiosyncrasies of an esteemed few who shared a linguistic preoccupation and polite disregard of the linguist. We are still in its wake. Inevitably, time has sent the once stylish philosophies to the clearance bin. But you can't beat linguism and

---

<sup>34</sup> Scott Collins, "Is CNN Looking for Its Own Game Change," *Los Angeles Times* (August 26, 2012), <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/aug/26/entertainment/la-et-st-cnn-conventions-20120826>.

<sup>35</sup> Simon Cowell is a television producer and personality most famous for his role as talent judge on *American Idol* and currently *The X Factor*. Gordon Ramsay is a world-class chef, television producer and television personality who began his television career with the British series *Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares* and has since expanded to an American version as well as the programs *Hell's Kitchen*, *MasterChef*, *The F Word*, and *Ramsay's Best Restaurant*. In his most recent venture, *Hotel Hell*, he expands yet again into the hotel business with little more than his expertise as a severely realistic and unflinchingly open-eyed critic as his qualification.

<sup>36</sup> E.g., consider the returns to prominence of newly-minted judges Jennifer Lopez, Steven Tyler, and Britney Spears.

conceptualism at these prices, and they make perfect accessories for the hottest brands in extrinsicism—posthumanism, neurophilosophy: Black Friday for brains.

While philosophy killed the subject, Warhol discovered celebrity, fame for fame, a 2-dimensional image of interiority.<sup>37</sup> The extroverted interest in interiority that created celebrity coalesced as paparazzo.<sup>38</sup> Celebrity begged for its privacy and objected against being perceived as a role model. The exteriorization of interiority led to its own reinteriorization. The dialectic has accelerated, mutated, and gone viral. Celebrity and paparazzo are one. Now, celebrity is fame for privacy's self-violation, and social networks give us all a way to sacrifice our privacy to share it. Combine these misdirected trends toward interiority—posthumanism, celebrity and paparazzo—and what do you get? [Picture 1] Stage one of the dialectic illustrating the complicity of celebrity and posthuman paparazzo,<sup>39</sup> and [Picture 2] stage two—a Celebes crested macaque taking a self-pic.<sup>40</sup>

So in addition to the level of the times, there is a temper of the times,<sup>41</sup> their distinctive character, the ways it will bend, and its breaking points. There are the problems posed by the times' intellectual heritage and then the untimely problems the times pose in spite of it.

How do we mediate the development of the habit of interiority? The systematic exigence leads consciousness from common sense to theory, and the critical exigence leads it from theory to interiority [Diagram 4]. It seems we should promote theory, specifically cognitional theory,

---

<sup>37</sup> *2-dimensional image* may be an overestimation. See “Andy Warhol’s One-Dimensional Art: 1956-1966” in *Andy Warhol*, ed. Annette Michelson (MIT, 2001), 1-46.

<sup>38</sup> Federico Fellini is responsible for the contemporary English and Italian use of the term *paparazzo*, the eponym of the photojournalist played by Walter Santesso in *La dolce vita* [Peter Bondanella, *The Cinema of Federico Fellini* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 136-8].

<sup>39</sup> Tamara Hardingham-Gill, “Model Laetitia Casta gets up to monkey business as she’s snapped by a chimp in bad taste photo-shoot,” *Mail Online* (September 18, 2012), <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2204992/Model-Laetitia-Casta-gets-monkey-business-photo-shoot-shes-snapped-chimp.html>.

<sup>40</sup> “Monkey steals camera to snap himself,” *The Telegraph* (July 4, 2011), <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/news-topics/howaboutthat/8615859/Monkey-steals-camera-to-snap-himself.html>.

<sup>41</sup> I am indebted to Elizabeth Murray for her help working out the ideas behind this talk and particularly for suggesting the formulation *temper of the times*.

and have it put to the test. But Lonergan distinguishes an ideal and real sequence.<sup>42</sup> The real sequence is temporal but not chronological<sup>43</sup>: one must be in the first before the second, and the second before the third, but these are only hypothetical necessities. Development can stall, habits can breakdown, and breakdown can become habitual. Consciousnesses at different stages of differentiation can coexist, and all these developments can mediate each other so we can have a culture in which everyone is over theory and into interiority, but no one has ever theorized and what most mean by interiority is one's experiences, opinions, feelings, and concerns as a definite member of some commonsense demographic—an intellectual, someone with a family, a religious person, a Westerner, a subaltern, a human, a posthuman. More and more we lose touch with the great minds and ourselves and inhabit “the no man's land” prepared by the mediation of theory by common sense—postsystematic literature and the *haute vulgarisation* of theory and philosophy<sup>44</sup>—by the mediation of common sense by theory—technological advance and pseudoscientific wisdom—by the mediation of commonsensical theory by theorized common sense—postscientific literature, science-fiction, film, interactive ebooks, RPGs (role-playing games), MMORPGs (massively multiplayer online role-playing games), self-help for brains<sup>45</sup>—and so on.<sup>46</sup>

As one approaches it more concretely, even the temporal order of the sequence starts to seem flexible. Worlds and habits may be more or less developed. There are implicit and explicit,

---

<sup>42</sup> MIT, 85. Similarly at *CWL* 22, 140, after presenting the genetic circle of exigences, Lonergan writes, “Moreover, that process as described, this matter of continually progressing in learning, is an ideal process. In the concrete there are the aberrations of extrinsicism and immanentism. Those aberrations result in falsifications or deviations of the development. Insofar as those deviations occur, they occur within the historical development of man.”

<sup>43</sup> MIT, 85.

<sup>44</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: Volume 6: Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, eds. Robert C. Croken, Frederick E. Crowe, and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 121 and *CWL* 22, 272.

<sup>45</sup> E.g., Norman Doidge, *The Brain that Changes Itself* (New York: Penguin, 2007) and [www.lumosity.com](http://www.lumosity.com).

<sup>46</sup> On the emergence of science fiction and other post-differentiation developments, see MIT, 97-9 and 304-5.

partial and full, generic and proper common senses, theories, and interiorities. Consciousness differentiates itself. The differentiation occurs according to the nature, dynamism, structure, and specialization of consciousness.<sup>47</sup> All the potential is there in the immediacy of undifferentiated consciousness. In *Method* Lonergan writes that at first there is no theory and no interiority.<sup>48</sup> But it is not that there is no systematic exigence and no inner and outer. The systematic exigence is evident in attention-span and mythmaking. The inner and outer are superimposed: the world is personalized and the subject exteriorized.<sup>49</sup> Lonergan divides *Insight* by distinguishing the cognitional theoretical, epistemological, and metaphysical questions. But in the Regis lectures he says that one really cannot solve these questions individually. In a way you have to get all the questions and answers at once.<sup>50</sup> Could one hit upon the solution and go right from common sense to a stable core of interiority [Diagram 5], or from common sense and a little theory to full interiority [Diagram 6]? Lonergan acknowledges the possibility of a consciousness that is differentiated only according to common sense and interiority.<sup>51</sup> He expresses some dismay over the eclipse of theory and doubts about moving directly to interiority from common sense—“queer company”<sup>52</sup>—but how about Plato? He saw the importance of systematic dialectic. He sounded the charge. But while he grasped its value, he assigned it to his students. His own accomplishments in theory were modest. Yet his mature work seems to revolve around a fundamental insight that is at once objective and subjective, metaphysical, cognitional theoretic,

---

<sup>47</sup> *CWL* 22, 50, 52-3 and 60.

<sup>48</sup> *MIT*, 257. *CWL* 22, 57-8, would suggest that he means that they exist but not as distinguished: “If one is to conceive of those things [i.e., developments described generally as “‘Hebraism,’ ‘Paulinism,’ ‘Hellenism,’ and so on’] in an explanatory fashion, with some exactitude, one has to move from mere description to explanation, and one does that insofar as one proceeds from a basic common root of undifferentiated consciousness in which the four worlds exist but are not distinguished.”

<sup>49</sup> *CWL* 22, 58.

<sup>50</sup> *CWL* 22, 123-5 and 138.

<sup>51</sup> *MIT*, 272.

<sup>52</sup> *CWL* 22, 77.

and epistemological. The recognition of the fact, function, and high but limited value of the systematic exigence is itself a distinctly interior accomplishment.

Because of the distinctions between the ideal and real sequences and the full and partial habits, there are many ways of being on the edge and crossing over it. For some insight into the question of how we can mediate the further development of our habit of interiority, we can see how Lonergan attempted to develop his own. I will play an excerpt from the last question and answer session of his Boston College lectures on transcendental philosophy and religion in which he is confronted by a pair of skeptics. I am not assuming the process of societal development is analogous to an individual's development or one individual's interaction with two individuals. Even under the influence of diverse, collective habits, it seems societal development must occur through the turning of one interiority at a time. The question of the possibility of going directly from common sense to interiority is abstract, especially for us. Theory has developed. But now we are on the edge of interiority as theory-averse. My suggestion will be that we should not try to mediate the development of interiority through theory, that, in fact, that approach would be counterproductive, and that instead we as interior theorists should try to bend with the temper of the times and to mediate the transition to interiority directly from its commonsensically theoretical common sense. It will appear that the superior efficiency of the commonsense approach to interiority is not just a historical accident but has a transcendental basis in the nature of the transition from the intellectual operations emphasized in theory to the critical operations emphasized in interiority.

2. *A Lonergan, a Verbalist, and an Analyst Talk into a Wall* [Next Frame]



The excerpt I am going to play is from the discussion period on Thursday, July 11, 1968, the sixth day of Lonergan's seminar at Boston College, "Transcendental Philosophy and the Study of Religion," in which he presented material he was working on for *Method in Theology*.<sup>53</sup> He answers questions from two unnamed audience members whom I will refer to as the Verbalist and the Analyst. The pair had already gone back and forth with Lonergan earlier in the week and in this session.

At 19 minutes the Verbalist raises the problems of cultural diversity and philosophical pluralism and accuses Lonergan of attempting to impose his philosophy on him despite the fact that he, the Verbalist, has his own background that shapes his own philosophy. Lonergan explains that, when it comes to evaluating philosophies, "I do it for myself; I ask others to do it for themselves; I explain transcendental method as how they go about it"; that, while one's background affects one's approach to the study of philosophy, "the degree to which you'll be willing to accept directives...and so on," "learning philosophy is going around the corner," "your corner"; and that philosophy is "one of the points at which" pluralism "is at a minimum" at least with respect to the fundamentals. He gives the example of there being certain kinds of operations involved in knowing. The Verbalist retorts that "the history of philosophy sort of negates that." Lonergan asks him where, and he says he is only denying the conclusions from the operations. Lonergan replies that he isn't drawing any conclusions: "I'm just asking you to attend to the operations. That's all the transcendental method is." The Verbalist wonders if everyone can get to the operations in the same way. Lonergan admits some get them and some do not, "but you don't get them by an act of will, it's walking down a tunnel."

At 28 minutes the Analyst accuses Lonergan of doing "something basically contradictory from what you say when you talk about meaning." He has trouble expressing himself, makes

---

<sup>53</sup> Lauzon CD/MP3 492/49200A0E060, [www.bernardlonergan.com](http://www.bernardlonergan.com), and *CWL* 22, 617-25.

many false starts, and frequently trails off. He aligns himself with Wittgenstein and takes aim at Lonergan's notion of the language of interiority: "It seems evident to me that the commonsense idea of meaning has nothing to do at all with...any kind of mental activity. It seems from my experience to be more a kind of correct response to a certain situation." He seems concerned by the fact that, while Lonergan says the language of interiority refers to experienced operations, he illustrates the meaning of *insight* and other terms with commonsense situations. At one point, the Analyst evokes a brusque response from Lonergan who feels compelled to set the record straight about his own terminology. Both seem to talk past each other. The Analyst then imagines a person inventing a term to refer to a cognitional experience and then using commonsense clues and ordinary language to convey its meaning. He implies that the resulting meaning would be based on ordinary language not cognition: "your evidence is gone." He says he is concerned with the "meaning/reference problem" but admits—maybe sincerely but I suspect a little hastily, more from caving to apparent social pressure and doing what is expected in such situations—that he doesn't know what his question is. Others laugh a little nervously. Lonergan replies, "I'm having considerable difficulty myself."

That brings us to our excerpt 37 minutes and 57 seconds into the discussion.<sup>54</sup> Lonergan calls on the Verbalist who in turn recalls the Analyst's unclear question:

Lonergan: Yes?

Verbalist: This goes back to the question, trying to clarify that question, perhaps, but.... Basically, your schema, you know, says that, if we talk about reason enough, we'll find this basic pattern, this transcendental pattern, such as, if we talk about experience enough, you'd have experience, reason, intellect, reason, and judgment; and you sort of always keep saying that, you know, this reason, the

---

<sup>54</sup> See *CWL* 22, 622-4.

unthematic, and it must be thematized, or it's, you know, it's unobjective and we must objectivize it. But I think the point I'm trying to make and he's trying to make is that all you really have is this thematization of it. There is nothing behind it.

L: Mm.

V: You sort of say there is a reality of reason behind the way we thematize it.

L: Mhm...

V: What we're trying...

L: Yes, if there's nothing behind it, eh...

V: Well, if there's some, well...

L: ...people will start off their conversation and their questions and so on explaining that in my life I never had any experience of sensing. If I appeared to do so, it was pure appearance: I'm a somnambulist. Secondly, never in my life did I have an experience of any type of intellectual curiosity: I never asked a question, and if I seemed to it was just appearance. And never in my life did I understand anything. I had never had the experience of understanding. That just doesn't occur in me. If you seem to think there is some appearance in my actions, some signs of intelligence, don't—pay no attention to them.

V: All we can use to talk about it is...are the words.

L: Eh?

V: All we can use to talk about it is words.

L: Oh yes that's true.

*At once:*

V: And there isn't a guarantee that the word's a reality and hence are prior realities.

L: But the words happen to have a meaning. Do you agree with those—do you want to make those statements?

V: Pardon?

L: Do you want to make those statements?

V: Which statements?

L: The one's I just made.

V: I didn't—well.

L: You weren't listening.

V: In that sense, the unthematic is a hypothesis.

L: No, no, no.

V: You don't get it.

L: You don't want to acknowledge anything apart from words is that it—a strict conceptualist or a strict verbalist.<sup>55</sup>

V: All I can use to talk is words.

L: I'm not saying you're using anything else when you talk. Can you speak of yourself seeing and not seeing as a result of the experiment of opening and closing your eyes?

V: What I mean by seeing may be different from what you mean by seeing.

[Inaudible] There is no such abstract essence of seeing.

L: Oh I'm not talking about an abstract essence. I'm talking about an experience

---

<sup>55</sup> Compare *CWL* 22, 531: "The fact that Aristotle does depend so much on grammar is partly an advantage, but it is not purely an advantage; there is a verbalism inherent in Aristotelianism that one has to escape; and one is escaping it in my emphasis on method."

that you possibly have.

V: You're talking about an abstract operation.

L: No, I'm not, I'm not, I'm not. I'm asking you if you've ever experienced seeing. Yourself seeing. Have you experienced that?

V: Yes.

L: Oh, there's something behind the word when you say, "I see," then, eh?, an experience in you.

V: But, you know, what I mean by *seeing* may not be the same as what you mean by *seeing*.

L: I'm not asking you to mean the same.

V: Yeah.

L: I'm asking you to mean something that you experience, and that you know very well takes place.

V: But see the point to the cultural differences: what I mean by *reason* is not what the Buddhist means by *reason*.

L: Okay, okay, okay, we can go into those later, eh? But the first thing is to know what you're doing when you're knowing. If you want to follow this method that I am talking about. You don't have to follow that method. It's only an invitation. I'm not trying to persuade anyone. I'm telling people what they might like doing. That's all.

L: Yes?

Analyst: At the risk of pushing this too far. Your assumption is that there is only

one alternative, and that one idea of reason in a sense, but namely that if a word is going to have a meaning there must be something that it means. In other words, something like a mental act word...

L: No, I'm not making assumptions. I'm asking a question.

A: Okay, but say now that we want to just raise the question about meaning and not talk about it in terms of one particular system, say—what we ordinarily do when we, you know, when we say that we know the meaning of a word. But, if you say, in effect—so your assumption seems to be that you have to—or the meaning, not your assumption, your assertion is that the meaning of a mental act word is a mental act, and therefore that there has to be something behind the words. In fact the words themselves are insufficient.

L: That isn't what I'm saying.

A: Well, you say, you know, you do something. Well, he's saying something. And then you say, you say something that has meaning. Therefore, you must do something.... As if you could have him catch...

L: What did I do? I asked him a question. I asked him if he wanted to make this statement. That's what I did.

A: Okay, so my point would be, regardless of that fact, not only that .... method is that there is a negative approach also. Even if you say he is wrong in a sense. I could say that, "If you do hold that say the word *insight* is—its meaning is reducible to a mental act. Well if this is all you say about meaning, then you could never really communicate with people about mental acts. It seems to me that if a word has a—if a word is a word it has a proper use. It has a criterion. It

has certain correct situations in which it is used, and there is actually no justification for your private experience...

L: That is a well-known procedure of linguistic analysis.

A: Well, true, but you're violating it...

L: But it isn't the necessary procedure in theology. The one and only.

A: In philosophy.

L: In philosophy of religion or theology.

A: It seems to be helpful though.

L: Oh it's good as far as it goes.

A: Well, to go beyond it—it seems to be the way we do mean words. To go beyond it seems to require a justification more than a pragmatic justification.

L: People get their justifications themselves.

A: But that doesn't make any sense. It requires justification and...

L: Okay. It makes sense to some people, and they're the one's I wish to speak to.

### 3. *What's So Funny?* [Next Frame]

Who's joking? Why does the audience laugh when Lonergan says, "I'm a somnambulist."

With the topic of the unthematic and thematic, the Verbalist harkens back to a distinction

Lonergan drew in his first lecture: "The unthematic takes precedence over the thematized....

[W]hat counts is not any concept of intelligence, but the fact that you are intelligent, not any

account of reasonableness but the fact, the human spiritual reality, of your reasonableness and

similarly of your responsibility. They are what do the work...."<sup>56</sup> Lonergan follows suit and

repeats the routine he employed a little later in the first lecture to deal with the question of the

---

<sup>56</sup> *CWL* 22, 435-6.

reality of the transcendental method.<sup>57</sup> He went through the method level by level to imagine the awkward position one would be in if one were to deny one's knowing. Lonergan rehearses the same act, now a little more personally and bluntly. It cannot be that funny, twice. So are they laughing in good humor with Lonergan or satirically at the Verbalist? In 1935 Lonergan wrote to Henry Keane: "[G]ive me someone I can speak to plainly and bluntly, that I can attack not only by argument but with the important ally of some well-deserved ridicule, and there is little difficulty in making him see the light."<sup>58</sup> About forty years later he referred to "the end of the age of argument."<sup>59</sup> Arguments are not that funny—even the really bad ones—just kind of sad. Does the audience think Lonergan is ridiculing the Verbalist? Is he? Is it nervous, embarrassed laughter? What about when it becomes evident the Verbalist was not paying attention to Lonergan's account of the commitments of one who, among other things, does not pay attention? They laugh more then; not the Verbalist. Does he really say to Lonergan, "You don't get it," or is that just the beginning of a longer sentence that is drowned out: an explanation of why he would have thought the unthematic is a hypothesis.<sup>60</sup> Lonergan's quick affirmation that you use words to talk also gets a good laugh, but silence from the Verbalist. From here he seems to get cagier and cagier. He repeatedly tells Lonergan what Lonergan is talking about and only begrudgingly affirms that he sees only to repeat his claim that Lonergan means some abstract seeing he knows not what. Lonergan seems aware of his souring demeanor and seems to try to avoid the laugh he knows he has earned as he emphatically asks the Verbalist to mean *something*: he quickly elaborates, "that you experience and that you know very well takes place."

---

<sup>57</sup> *CWL* 22, 438.

<sup>58</sup> Letter of January 22, 1935, to Rev. Henry Keane, S.J., Provincial of the Upper Canada Province of the Society of Jesus.

<sup>59</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Philosophy of God, and Theology* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1973), 47 ff.

<sup>60</sup> One can imagine several ways the sentence could have continued if it was incomplete. E.g., "You don't get it on its own," or, "You don't get it except by thematizing it."



Did things go too far? The tone grows somber. The Verbalist seems to have understood Lonergan, at least what he is apt to say, but to the Verbalist, Lonergan never paid him the same respect. He never heard him out about the hypothetical. He never got the point about cultural pluralism, and he still will not take it up. The Verbalist is left speechless. I think Lonergan is serious when he says he is only offering an invitation. He said the same thing in his first lecture and did the same thing in *Insight*.<sup>61</sup> But is it any wonder the audience finds it funny? Here is Lonergan just offering a humble invitation to a student—as Sandra Fluke said to Bill Clinton when the explainer-in-chief said he was nervous about giving his speech: “Sir. Please.”<sup>62</sup>

The Analyst opens with a joke, but is it humorous, satirical, or strategic. Is that Lonergan laughing when the Analyst says Lonergan’s “assumption” is that a word with a meaning must mean something? Lonergan ruthlessly tears Dewart apart for implying the opposite.<sup>63</sup> The Analyst gets curt with Lonergan—“You *do* something. Well, he’s *saying* something”—and Lonergan responds grimly—“*What did I do? I asked him a question.... That’s what I did.*” Neither Lonergan nor the Analyst had the laughs over the Analyst’s disregard of the fact that Lonergan asked a question. The audience quiets down, and the whole exchange ends on a cold and alienating note.

This is one interpretation of what’s so funny and what’s not so funny about this exchange. There could be many others given all the possible perspectives of all those involved and all possible interpreters. As long as that is the case, though, one thing must be true: that the meaning involved in the exchange is intersubjective and elemental,<sup>64</sup> and as such strikes at the

---

<sup>61</sup> *CWL* 22, 427.

<sup>62</sup> Melissa Jetsen, “Sandra Fluke to Bill Clinton’s Claim of Nerves: ‘Sir. Please.’” *Huffington Post* (September 6, 2012), [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/09/06/sandra-fluke-bill-clinton\\_n\\_1862960.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/09/06/sandra-fluke-bill-clinton_n_1862960.html).

<sup>63</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *A Second Collection: Papers*, eds. William F. Ryan and Bernard J. Tyrrell (London: Darton Longman & Todd, 1974), 11-32.

<sup>64</sup> *MIT*, 59-61 and 67.

undifferentiated totality of consciousness and engages the whole person deeply. Whether the laughter was satirical, derisive, humorous, cordial, feigned, delightful, or awkward, it appeared because whole persons were there at risk of being mocked, put down, uplifted, reassured, fooled, rejoiced over, and tripped up. The apparent joy and conviviality are of a piece with the apparent desperation and estrangement. Something more than argument is at work: “laughter supposes only human nature, and men there are.”<sup>65</sup>

#### 4. “*What Did I Do?*” [Next Frame]

The laughter is a clue to the general nature of what is going on. It is three people meeting at three different corners, three people walking down one tunnel—one walking backwards—or two operational habits operating. “This is old song that will not declare itself”<sup>66</sup>: the clash of divergent horizons.

Specifically, it is a confrontation of interiority and a brand of theoretically commonsensical theory distinctive of a post-theoretical extrinsically critical and exteriorly interior age. Lonergan is trying to develop the habit of interiority: “the first thing is to know what you’re doing when you’re knowing.” Lonergan is trying to get the Verbalist and Analyst to recognize what they are doing. Meanwhile, the Verbalist and Analyst acknowledge little beyond cultural, linguistic, and Wittgensteinian facts. They are extrinsically critical. They are concerned about truth, evidence, bases, criteria, publicity of meaning, violation, justification; but they outsource their judging to experiences of difference and customs of ordinary language use and analysis: it seems to me that a word has a criterion; it seems to be the way we do mean words; it seems helpful; it seems to me that it seems to Wittgenstein. They don’t give

---

<sup>65</sup> *CWL* 3, 649.

<sup>66</sup> Wallace Stevens, “Metaphors of a Magnifico” in *The Collected Poems* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 19.

themselves freely to the project of justifying the judgment of interior meaning. Rather, they require their expenditure be justified. The Analyst communicates that in his view the theory of meaning he, say, said Lonergan held would render communication about mental acts impossible. If holding a theory of meaning is a mental act, albeit theoretical, the Analyst might be right. After all, Lonergan did not hold that theory—“That isn’t what I’m saying”—a fact that Lonergan did not communicate and that the Analyst, not only did not, but according to the principles of linguistic analysis could not have known. He and the Verbalist are exteriorly interior. The only operations they readily acknowledge are theoretical, audible, or noncommittal—thematizing, saying, assuming, asserting, holding, and knowing in the sense of “you know.” They attempt to thematize what is happening while denying the existence or significance of the unthematic, and as we might expect from their polite disregard of the unthematic, they repeatedly misidentify what is happening. They deny the reality or relevance of anything behind the thematized. They really insist on this point. They insist that Lonergan’s thematization of the unthematic and thematic incorrectly thematizes the unthematic—that there is no behind behind the behind. They will not touch their own privacy—too taboo—and yet they do not hesitate to tell Lonergan what he has been up to in the privacy of their subjective objectifications of his explicit publicity.

5. “*Okay, Okay, Okay, We Can Go into Those Later, Eh?*” [Next Frame]

Where to start? Despite the fact that the Verbalist and Analyst keep asserting that he is assuming, asserting, speaking abstractly and systematically, Lonergan refrains from theory. The Verbalist wants definitions of *seeing* and *reason* and an argument that can overcome the fact of cultural pluralism and the conceptualist criteriology he makes of it. The Analyst wants a justification for violating a popular extrinsicist procedure, a linguistic criteriology, a theory of

meaning and reference. Lonergan avoids their requests. Instead, he invites the Verbalist to contradict himself performatively and confounds the Analyst by saying that people get their justifications themselves.

What could the Verbalist and Analyst think Lonergan's doing? The Verbalist may catch on just to the way Lonergan's talking. He may still think Lonergan is operating theoretically despite the annoying fact he won't get down to the real theoretical issues. But when Lonergan transforms the Analyst's singular theoretical justification into the plural justifications, it seems he is at a loss to accommodate the answer within his world: "But that doesn't make any sense." Neither the Verbalist nor the Analyst participate fully in the habit of interiority. They are theoretically post-theoretical, wary of speculative systems, and grand transcendental schemas. They are theoretically commonsensically theoretical. But by this point Lonergan must seem to them to have abandoned himself completely to common sense. What alternative could they conceive? Part of the humor of the exchange seems to be due to the incongruity between the Verbalist's and Analyst's attempts at sophisticated philosophical argument and Lonergan's commonsensical, *ad hoc*, and *ad hominem* responses.

Why does Lonergan proceed this way instead of going back over interiority theoretically, working out the whole cognitional process, defining each operation, raising the critical question, and demonstrating the process's unrevisability? On one hand, the time might not have been right—too skeptical or not interior enough in the first place to receive a theory of interiority. On the other, there is a certain transcendental affinity between common sense and interiority that theory does not share. Theory loses sight of the particular operator who is the object of interiority, but common sense keeps her in view.<sup>67</sup> Theory handles explanatory relations and

---

<sup>67</sup> "Now, the whole orientation of common sense is centered in the subject and regards the world as related to him, as the field of his behavior, influence, action, as colored by his desires, hopes, fears, joys, sorrows" (CWL 22, 532).

pure conjugates of objective contents of acts, while common sense handles descriptive relations and conscious experiential conjugates. Interiority regards pure conjugates of conscious acts, which are included in experiential conjugates, or through operational abstraction just the isomorphic structures of operations and their objects, which are presented twice in every set of experiential conjugates.<sup>68</sup> The relations between the pure conscious conjugates and the isomorphic structures are also conscious, and so their descriptions, when adequate, are explanations.<sup>69</sup> A prudent common sense could get you pretty close to a fully critical interiority. Further, while common sense emphasizes experience it also has a penchant for judging; theory puts it off. When the habitually theoretical operator turns to judgment, she keeps reverting to questions for intelligence—Do you see? What do you mean by *see*? What if I mean something else by *see*? Are you reasonable? What do you mean by *reason*? What about other meanings of *reason*? The theorist who does judge tends to be a skeptic. Lonergan says that in judging “one is standing back.”<sup>70</sup> Just as there is an empirical residue that is left behind when one grasps the intelligibility in data,<sup>71</sup> there is a conceptual residue left behind when one stands back from questions for intelligence and raises a question for judgment. At key points, Lonergan often acknowledges conceptual inadequacy. The “I” that self-affirms is conceptually inadequate, but I know well enough what “I” means.<sup>72</sup> I could know a lot more about my computer, but I know enough to judge that I am not it.<sup>73</sup> But if conceptual inadequacy merely means further potential for accuracy, precision, clarity, coherence, and comprehensiveness, then any set of concepts I

---

<sup>68</sup> *CWL* 3, 102-5 and *De circulo operationem*.

<sup>69</sup> *CWL* 3, 357-66.

<sup>70</sup> *CWL* 22, 431.

<sup>71</sup> *CWL* 3, 50-6.

<sup>72</sup> *CWL* 3, 352-3.

<sup>73</sup> *CWL* 3, 366-71.

combine in a proposition for judgment will be conceptually inadequate.<sup>74</sup> Since full interiority comes with the affirmation that I am a knower, the conclusion of judging, one must stand back prior to achieving full interiority. This standing back is the pursuit of the reflective insight that I have understood what I have observed correctly. It involves self-reflection. But prior to full interiority, there is not a full apprehension of the self as interior—as dynamically self-ordering according to the transcendental notions. While the theoretical self is pushed aside or lost in questions for intelligence, there remains the full commonsense self, dynamically self-ordering according to its commonsense aims. [Diagram 7] So in addition to sharing an affinity with interiority, common sense fills a mediative role that theory cannot. One proceeds according to the systematic exigence from common sense to theory and then by the critical exigence from theory back through common sense to interiority.<sup>75</sup>

6. “Which Statements?” [Next Frame]

Performed for the first time by one individual, this commonsense mediation would be a confrontation with the necessities of one’s transcendental operational habit in everyday living—a grasp of the structure of knowing in some concrete situation, a set of experiential conjugates—as a grasp of the structure of knowing and being at once: txtng n drvng klls. Mediated by another theoretical operator, it is an invitation to or a trap of performative self-contradiction—a formal introduction of one’s commonsense self to one’s interior self [Diagram 8]. In neither case is it necessarily going to work. It does not seem to have worked for Lonergan. There is the possibility of evasion complicated by the fact that it is easier for a commonsense self to evade

---

<sup>74</sup> *CWL* 22, 261-2 and 264.

<sup>75</sup> For another consideration of the affinities between common sense and interiority, the viability of a commonsense approach to interiority, and Lonergan’s openness to such an approach, see Mark Morelli, “The Authentication of Common Sense from Below Upward: Mediating Self-Correcting Folk Psychology,” *Lonergan Workshop*, vol. 15 (1999): 117-40.

since it only has its commonsense criteria in mind. The Verbalist maintains his relative authenticity as a transcendently immethodical postcolonial posthuman while sacrificing his absolute authenticity: “Which statements?”<sup>76</sup> He does not admit that he experiences and does not get caught contradicting himself by paying attention remarkably well. He does not even admit he was not listening. Of course, though, he is attentive enough to get cagey. And there are always other ways out. The Analyst remains in theory—“regardless of that fact”—practically unperturbed compared to the Verbalist. Yet he did have a lot of trouble, do a lot of misspeaking, and even invented a word in the process of formulating his argument against Lonergan’s private language, the meaning of which he, the Analyst, ultimately left unsaid.

#### 7. *No One’s Laughing* [Next Frame]

Lonergan seems to realize he will get nowhere with the Analyst. His parting words are dismissive, but they are tempered by the possibility that he is including commonsense operators in the class of those who would understand how people could find their justifications themselves. He is not only willing to speak to other fully interior subjects.

#### 8. *Back to Theory* [Next Frame]

Commonsense interiority is not enough. But if a commonsense approach to interiority is successful, it would have positive effects for theory. The formation of a proper habit of interiority and the establishment of a proper settlement in the world of interiority would be a new reason to theorize. The systematic exigence is ineluctable. Every new achievement gives rise to a new systematic impulse. People can hardly stop talking about themselves as it is. Imagine if

---

<sup>76</sup> On the distinction between relative and absolute authenticity, see *CWL* 22, 15-8.

they knew themselves and could trust their talk to be true. The habit of interiority would provide the knowledge that there is truth to theory—something to look forward to.

*Lonergan debating with a verbalist and an analyst. Excerpt from Lauzon CD/MP3 492/49200A0E060, [www.bernardlonergan.com](http://www.bernardlonergan.com), and CWL 22, 617-25.*