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6. General Bias and Its Time in Thought

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Abstract

General bias varies with various contexts. This paper investigates some manifestations of general bias among specialists in English-speaking professional philosophy. In turn, St. Pope John Paul II claims that “Philosophy . . . is the mirror which reflects the culture of a people.” In the 2020 PhilPapers Survey, substantial majorities identified as metaphilosophical naturalists (50.2% v. 31.1%) and as physicalists (51.9% v. 32.1%). A supermajority agreed that there is a “hard problem of consciousness” (62.4%) and a supermajority identified as atheists (66.9%). “Dogmatic scientific realism, various forms of materialism, compatibilism, and atheism [are] the unquestioned default positions” (Hanna 2013). General bias is manifest in at least three dimensions: a nearly complete separation of philosophy from theology; a nearly total withdrawal of credit from the notion of the supernatural; and a nearly permanent agnosticism concerning the metaphysical notion of personhood. If these are counterpositions, the key to their reversal is the notion of interiority.

Keywords: Lonergan, general bias, 2020 PhilPapers Survey, *Fides et ratio*, atheism, naturalism, personalism, interiority, the supernatural

General Bias in Contemporary Philosophy

This year's theme for the Kripke Center Symposium is "religion in the public square." Churches and other places of worship belong to the social landscape of public places as much as hospitals, schools, and retail malls. The tendency toward a merely privatized religion, penultimate to its withering away, would belong to the limit situation of a thoroughgoing secularization of society (see Taylor 2007 and Morgan 2008), under the aegis of what Jürgen Habermas called "civic privatism" as a characteristic feature of advanced capitalist societies (Habermas 1975, 37, 77–80, 117–21).¹ On the one hand, in the United States, this tendency is far from being fulfilled, as one traces the curve that runs from the Moral Majority, the Christian Coalition, the Reagan Revolution of the 1980s, "a thousand points of light" (George H.W. Bush), and "compassionate conservatism" (George W. Bush), to the white Christian nationalism of the 2020s. But on the other hand, it is a movement that can also be characterized as a cultural reaction to the nearly irresistible and steadily advancing cultural action of secularism, which John Paul II (1999) defines as "a model of man lacking all reference to the transcendent." As the process of secularization advances, there has been a corresponding decline in the public face of Christianity. In particular, recent studies from the Pew Research Center (2019; 2022a; 2022b) document the rapid pace of demographic decline of practicing Christians, who "could make up less than half of the U.S. population within a few decades." This decline is just what we might expect from a form of society in thrall to the mystifications of economism, physicalism, and secularism, as well as the underlying material process of their manufacture. "Economism" is the translation of all values or goods into commercial values. "Physicalism" is "roughly" the "thesis" on the scale of a worldview, that "everything is physical," with the implication that nothing nonphysical or immaterial exists (see Stoljar 2010, 235). Economism and physicalism, in turn, go hand in glove with secularism. In *Evangeliūm Vitae* (1995), similar terms appear, which John Paul II groups together under the heading of a "culture of death" (12), by which he means, essentially, the "eclipse of the sense of God" (21). Along the same lines, in *Following Christ in a Consumer Society*, John F. Kavanaugh, S.J. (1981) distinguishes between the "commodity form" and the "personal form," and then in *Who Count as Persons?* (2001, 139–46), on the basis of this distinction, he criticizes the "reality system" of "consumer capitalism."

The causal explanation of these countervailing tendencies, the political ascendancy of one kind of Christianity (evangelical Protestantism) in tension with the general demographic decline in the overall number of practicing Christians as documented by Pew, is bound to be complex, multiform, and best worked out by the empirical research of social scientists and ethnographers. Habermas, who is committed to "methodological atheism" in his theoretical work (see Finlayson and Rees 2023), already presupposes the "atheism of the masses" in *Legitimation Crisis* (1975, 80). This "atheism of the masses" is illuminated from a Catholic point of view by Phil Davignon, author of *Practicing Christians, Practical Atheists* (2023a). In "The Culture of Death and the Practice of Everyday Life" (2023b), he quotes Taylor, concerning a "secular social imaginary": it is "more than a loss of religious belief and practice, but includes the adoption of a secular social imaginary—where people imagine the world and their lives

¹ Habermas defines "civic privatism" as follows: "political abstinence, along with an orientation to career, leisure, and pleasure" (1975, 37).

through an immanent frame, no matter their beliefs.” This is, in effect, what John Paul II means by *practical atheism* (1999). Davignon pivots to *Evangelium Vitae* and what is meant by a “culture of death”: namely, the “eclipse of the sense of God . . . [When] the sense of God is lost, there is also a tendency to lose the sense of man (*sic*), and his dignity and life” (1995, 21).

The “atheism of the masses,” the “practical atheism” characteristic of late capitalist societies, brought to light by Habermas and criticized by Kavanaugh, John Paul II, and Davignon, is among the more prominent phenomena in the *cultural dimension* of religion in the public square. In *Method in Theology*, Bernard Lonergan, whose thought is the center of gravity of this paper, takes an “empirical” approach to culture, which he defines as “a set of meanings and values informing a common way of life” (1972, 301). Moreover, if John Paul II is correct to claim that “Philosophy . . . is the mirror which reflects the culture of a people,” we might also expect complementary and reinforcing trends in what is going forward in professional philosophy (1998, 103), which is the subject-matter of this paper. Trends in academic, professionalized philosophy, although they do not “cause” culture, do constitute a body of evidence of what *sociocultural tendencies* are being worked out in the contemporary situation. The results from 1,785 respondents to the 2020 PhilPapers Survey (distributed to 7,685 English-speaking philosophers) bear out John Paul II’s point. Substantial majorities identified as metaphilosophical naturalists (50.2% v. 31.1%) and as physicalists (51.9% v. 32.1%). A supermajority agreed that there is a “hard problem of consciousness” (62.4%) and a supermajority identified as atheists (66.9%) (Bourget and Chalmers 2023, 6–9). The philosophical and theoretical atheism evident in professional academic philosophy is a mirror reflecting the atheism of the masses and the practical atheism that is not hard to find in the public square.

Commenting on the significance of their report, Bourget and Chalmers write that “philosophers often appeal to sociological claims about the distributions of views among philosophers, for example in justifying which views should be taken seriously, and it makes sense for these claims to be well-grounded” (2023, 1); that is, supported by the data. This is a little like saying that a million Elvis Presley fans cannot be wrong. But once we correct for Herbert Butterfield’s (1965) Whig-historian approach to philosophical questions and approach them instead in a historically minded way, physicalism, metaphilosophical naturalism, and atheism show up as relatively recent and local commitments, as Marilynne Robinson points out in *Absence of Mind*. Robinson writes,

What an interesting problem is being evaded here! The great quarrel in modern Western life is said to be between religion and science. They tend to be treated as if there were a kind of symmetry between them, presumably because of their supposed Manichean opposition. But science is a comparatively recent phenomenon, for several centuries strongly identified with the culture of the West, which it has profoundly influenced and by which it has been formed and channeled. Because it is recent and culturally localized, it is difficult to distinguish from its setting. . . . Religion, on the contrary, is ancient and global, and, since it has no clear geographic or temporal limits, persisting as cultural habit even where it seems to have been suppressed or renounced, it is very difficult to define, “definition” being a word which means etymologically and in fact “a setting of limits.” (2010, 9–10)

Robinson's observation might lead us to think of Bourget and Chalmers's putative sociological justification of which philosophical views we should take seriously in the very different light of Bernard Lonergan's notion of general bias.

In *Insight*, Lonergan devotes Chapters Six and Seven to the manner of intelligence he calls common sense (1992, 196–269). He writes that “Common sense, unlike the sciences, is a specialization in the particular and concrete” (1992, 198–99). It “has no theoretical inclinations. . . . Indeed, the supreme canon of common sense is the restriction of further questions to the realm of the concrete and particular, the immediate and practical” (1992, 201). Its genius is the working out of practical solutions to immediate problems. But insofar as it restricts the field of its questions to the concrete, particular, immediate, and practical, Lonergan argues that it is liable toward bias. He singles out dramatic, individual, group, and general forms of bias (for dramatic bias and scotosis, see 1992, 214–15; for individual bias or egoism, see 1992, 244–47; for group bias, see 1992, 247–50; and for general bias, see 1992, 250–67). Concerning general bias, he writes, “To err is human, and common sense is very human. Besides the bias of the dramatic subject, of the individual egoist, of the member of a given class or nation, there is a further bias to which all [people] are prone. For [people] are rational animals, but a full development of their animality is both more common and more rapid than a full development of their intelligence and reasonableness” (1992, 250). He continues,

The lag of intellectual development, its difficulty, and its apparently meager returns bear in an especial manner on common sense. . . . Every specialist runs the risk of turning his specialty into a bias by failing to recognize and appreciate the significance of other fields. Common sense almost invariably makes that mistake; 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 immediately practical into disregard of larger issues and indifference to long-term results. (1992, 251)

Therefore, over the longer cycle, Lonergan argues that “the general bias of common sense generates an increasingly significant residue that (1) is immanent in the social facts, (2) is not intelligible, yet (3) cannot be abstracted from if one is to consider the facts as in fact they are. Let us name this residue the social surd” (1992, 255).

Once the question is posed, we would not want to evade it, as to whether the 2020 PhilPapers Survey establishes the range of views that philosophers should take seriously, or whether the leading results of the survey reflect instead the specialist risk of general bias creeping into the discipline over the longer cycle of the past half century (or longer). The 2020 survey was a follow-up to the first PhilPapers Survey in 2009, which Bourget and Chalmers reported out in 2013 in “What Do Philosophers Believe?” Around the same time, the marginalized Kant scholar Robert Hanna (2013) portrayed a “core philosophy” together with an “official opposition” that colludes in the hegemony of the core. In his cranky “Manifesto,” he writes, “Dogmatic scientific realism, various forms of materialism, compatibilism, and atheism [have become] the unquestioned default positions, quixotically opposed by a small minority of reactionary professional philosophers . . . clinging to the core by the skin of their

teeth, who still [defend] anti-realism, or Cartesian dualism, or agent-causal libertarian incompatibilism, and/or theism.” Ways of doing philosophy outside this core are “simply off the grid . . . [They are] the third rail of mainstream philosophy: Touch it, and you die professionally, i.e., no one in the mainstream or working in or near the core ever reads your work or takes you seriously again.”

It nearly goes without saying, then, that John Paul II’s conceptualization of philosophy in *Fides et ratio* is also off the grid. In “Fides et Ratio After Athens and Jerusalem,” the Lonerganian philosopher and theologian Frederick Lawrence (2020), also writing from the margins, bluntly confesses this circumstance:

From a basic stance of agreement [with the encyclical], I fear that [it] manages to say the right things in a way that is too far removed from our concrete situation of teaching and learning today. . . . The letter takes for granted not only that the tension between Athens and Jerusalem lies at the heart of Western culture but that a synthesis between them was achieved in the Middle Ages, and revived in the era between *Aeterni Patris* and Vatican Council II. Even the most superficial survey of our university today will leave no doubt that this fragile synthesis has shattered. . . . If *Fides et ratio* makes a case for the need for philosophy convincingly, it does so for a world that no longer exists within the confines of a university such as Boston College or the University of Notre Dame.

For some of us, the disjunction between mainstream professional philosophy in the English-speaking world and the conception of philosophy outlined in *Fides et ratio* is bound to be disconcerting. If Hanna’s “Manifesto” is correct about “unquestioned default positions,” “hegemony,” what is “off the grid,” and the “third rail,” then the thesis of this paper is that Lonergan’s notion of general bias provides a compelling explanation as well of the seeming obviousness of metaphilosophical naturalism, physicalism, and atheism: “touch [the third rail] and you die professionally.” If common sense specializes in practical solutions to immediate problems, it also brushes aside the further relevant questions that would open philosophy onto the theological horizon of the Creed, dogmas and doctrines, the sacraments, and an essentially sacramental conception of reality.

One important aspect of the problem concerns the division of labor within the discipline of philosophy itself, which has become increasingly technical and specialized over the past century, principally as a result of the analytic aspiration as old as Bertrand Russell and the Vienna Circle to render philosophy “scientific,” or in other words, to transform it into an array of technical and specialized inquiries that has turned out to foster increasing disciplinary fragmentation. Again, when Lonergan works out general bias in *Insight*, he writes, “Every specialist runs the risk of turning his specialty into a bias by failing to recognize and appreciate the significance of other fields” (1992, 251). When he writes about specialization in *Method in Theology*, he distinguishes field, department, and subject specialization from the eightfold division of functional specialties he advocates (1972, 125–26). In field specialization, “the specialist [is] one who knows more and more about less and less” (1972, 125). In *Phenomenology and Logic*, he turns to “The Later Husserl” and Husserl’s *Crisis* in order to represent “Five Criticisms of Modern Science,” all five of which are germane to the problem of general bias

in the contemporary life of the university and within departments of philosophy. They are (1) the tendency to splinter; (2) the autonomy of the splinters; (3) the drift to the criterion of technical competence; (4) concerning the position of the human sciences, a “series of nostrums no better and no worse than folk medicine”; and (5) the “impossibility of reorientation on the present basis” (2001, 252–54).

The collusion between unquestioned default positions and the preeminence of technique constitutes a bad infinity; hence, the “impossibility of reorientation on the present basis.” Again, common sense specializes in immediate solutions to practical problems, to the disregard, from a theoretical standpoint, of further relevant questions. Professional philosophy brings with it a welter of practical problems from an institutional and administrative standpoint, generally with a low tolerance for merely theoretical concerns. There are practical problems in need of immediate solutions concerning credentialing, the curriculum and requirements of graduate programs, the implementation of undergraduate curricula, hiring, reappointment, tenure, promotion, peer review, publishing, canons of professional development, and more. Because commonsense intelligence differs from the exercise of the detached, disinterested, and unrestricted desire to know (Lonergan 1992, 28–29), it is liable to the forms of bias Lonergan outlines in *Insight*. The upshot is predictably the method of commonsense eclecticism (Lonergan 1992, 441–45). Lonergan writes that “commonsense eclecticism deprecates the effort to understand. For it, problems are immutable features of the mental landscape, and syntheses are to be effected by somebody else who, when he has finished his system, will provide a name for merely another viewpoint” (1992, 443). It would therefore be rude not to notice the irony of proposing a Lonerganian solution, implemented by Lonergan specialists, adopting Lonerganian techniques. In an institutionalized commonsense eclecticism, granted “n” viewpoints, Lonergan’s system would be merely “n + 1,” “merely another viewpoint,” still infinitely distant from the “philosophy of philosophies . . . imperfectly . . . initiated by Hegel” (1992, 293).

Three Consequences of General Bias

If the limit of the situation described to this point is a “social surd” (Lonergan 1992, 255), and if it belongs to a longer cycle of decline (Lonergan 1972, 54–55), then we would not expect it to be fully coherent or intelligible. However, to the extent that there is a discernible pattern, the general bias exhibited in the mainstream core of contemporary philosophy, exacerbated by splintering, and cobbled together by the method of commonsense eclecticism, has at least three unfortunate manifestations with respect to the place of philosophy in contemporary appropriations of the Catholic intellectual tradition: first, a nearly complete separation of philosophy from theology; second, a nearly total withdrawal of credit from the notion of the supernatural; and third, a nearly permanent agnosticism concerning the metaphysical notion of personhood. In Lonergan’s notion of dialectic (see 1992, 553–617; 1972, 235–66), if these three manifestations are counterpositions, the key to their reversal is the notion of interiority. In “Journey into Interiority,” Brian Cronin (2022) calls the transition from theory to interiority the “entry point,” but also a “stumbling block” and “the pons asinorum of Lonergan studies.”

Concerning the first manifestation of general bias inside academic philosophy—the nearly complete separation of philosophy from theology—there is a fork in the road. Either philosophy opens onto a theological horizon, or it forecloses that possibility. But the classical

view of philosophy as adjunctive, from Augustine to the medieval synthesis and from John Henry Newman to Bernard Lonergan, has been eclipsed by the mainstream. In *Fides et ratio*, John Paul II affirms the autonomy of philosophy, but he also claims that “the enterprise of philosophy is always open—at least implicitly—to the supernatural” (1998, 75). However, he continues, “It is clear that this legitimate approach is rejected by the theory of so-called ‘separate’ philosophy, pursued by some modern philosophers. This theory claims for philosophy not only a valid autonomy, but a self-sufficiency of thought which is patently invalid. In refusing the truth offered by divine Revelation, philosophy only does itself damage, since this is to preclude access to a deeper knowledge of truth” (1998, 75). We can guess that the Pope’s either high-minded or high-handed magisterial declamation will seem congenial to few and off-putting to many. His view presupposes the complementarity of faith with reason, the truth of what has been divinely revealed, and the unity of truth, as opposed, for instance, to Stephen Jay Gould’s (1997, 2002) “nonoverlapping magisteria,”² which might have otherwise comforted those who really believe in God and not merely, in Daniel Dennett’s (2006, 2008) expression, believe in believing in God. The idea of nonoverlapping magisteria is an unstable compromise between two dialectically opposed and irreconcilable views; a Pope’s view, relying on the magisterial authority of religion, and a magisterial atheist’s view, relying on the authority of science, or more likely, what Robinson (2010) calls “parascience.”³

In *Phenomenology and Logic*, Lonergan also criticizes the separation of philosophy from theology, which he traces back to Descartes (2001, 346). Robinson’s contrarian point (quoted above) is that the image of science in conflict with religion supposes a “Manichean opposition,” as if they were competitors, separate yet symmetrical. Likewise, Lonergan, who also affirms the autonomy of science from philosophy and theology (1972, 96), posits philosophy and theology as complementary rather than separate intellectual pursuits, reinforcing the outlook of *Fides et ratio*. He writes, “Once philosophy becomes separated from theology, as it does in Descartes and the subsequent tradition (not merely distinguished but separated), there arises a problem of the genesis of *sapientia*. How does one get to wisdom?” (2001, 346). Wisdom, the classic aim not only of Aristotle’s metaphysics but also of Thomistic

² In “Nonoverlapping Magisteria” (1997), Gould explicitly responds to John Paul II’s “Truth Cannot Contradict Truth” (1996).

³ Consider two quotations from *Absence of Mind*. First, Robinson writes, “There is at present an assertive popular literature that describes the mind as if from the posture of science. For the purposes of these writers, it is as if chaste and rational scientific objectivity certified the value of their methods and the truth of their conclusions. The foil for their argument, sometimes implicit, usually explicit, is that old romantic myth of the self still encouraged by religion or left in its wake as a sort of cultural residue needing to be swept away. . . . What I wish to question are not the methods of science, but the methods of a kind of argument that claims the authority of science or highly specialized knowledge, that assumes a protective coloration that allows it to pass for science yet does not practice the self-discipline or self-criticism for which science is distinguished” (2010, 2). And again: “There is a characteristic certainty that is present structurally in the kind of thought and writing to which I wish to draw attention, a boldness that diminishes its subject. I will refer to this as parascientific literature. By this phrase I mean a robust, and surprisingly conventional, genre of social or political theory or anthropology that makes its case by proceeding, using the science of its moment, from a genesis of human nature in primordial life to a set of general conclusions about what our nature is and must be, together with the ethical, political, economic and/or philosophic implications to be drawn from these conclusions. One of the characterizing traits of this large and burgeoning literature is its confidence that science has given us knowledge sufficient to allow us to answer certain essential questions about the nature of reality, if only by dismissing them” (2010, 32–33).

philosophy and theology, is not the objective of any specialized empirical science, nor do physicists, chemists, or biologists define or pursue their inquiries along this general line. On the other hand, whereas, on the premise of the complementarity of faith and reason, the pursuit of wisdom in this Aristotelian and Thomistic sense is a well-defined, well-formulated, and rigorously demarcated purpose of inquiry in theology and philosophy, what the analogous pursuit would be for parascience is anyone's guess (see Wilkins 2018).

Openness to the supernatural is a basic question for our time in thought. In Lonergan's theory of dialectic, counterpositions are to be reversed and positions affirmed (1992, 553–617; 1972, 235–66). But which are the counter-positional views? A second manifestation of general bias in philosophy today is the nearly total withdrawal of credit from the notion of the supernatural. In Robinson's hands, Dennett is the iconic figure. Referring to Dennett's *Breaking the Spell* (2006), she writes:

Dennett sheers off the contemplative side of faith, its subjectivity, as if the collective expressions of religion and the inward experience of it were nonoverlapping magisteria, as if religion were only what could be observed using the methods of anthropology or sociology, without reference to the deeply pensive solitudes that bring individuals into congregations and communities to be nurtured by the thought and culture they find there. Thus he is freed to bypass John Donne and the Sufi poets and to move on to a description of the practices of cargo cultists, whom, it is unfortunately fair to assume, anthropology does not present in the richest light, either. (2010, 9)

At this point, a disjunction is intellectually unavoidable. Either belief in the supernatural is like being in a cargo cult, or else there is a theorem of the supernatural that can be demonstrated and affirmed. Dennett goes the former way; Lonergan goes the latter.

In *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St Thomas Aquinas*, Lonergan (2000) argues that the theorem of the supernatural was discovered by Philip the Chancellor in the mid-thirteenth century; that prior to Philip's discovery, there was no truly systematic speculative theology; but that on the basis of his discovery, speculative theology took off like a rocket in the work of Aquinas. As Lonergan explains, prior to the thirteenth century, there was a widespread "unconscious confusion" between what is attributable to grace and what to freedom; and likewise, what is attributable to supernatural and what to natural conditions, states, events, and so forth. The "supernatural character of grace" had been recognized, but what was missing was a "line of reference" in terms of which a clear and valid distinction could be drawn, as opposed to a confusing and fallacious patchwork of guesses, between the miraculous and the non-miraculous, what to attribute to our own effort and what to attribute to God's, and so on. The "difficulty was to explain why everything was not grace; after all, what is there that is not a free gift of God?" (2000, 15). The missing "line of reference," which Lonergan calls a "theorem," "the scientific elaboration of a common notion" (2000, 164), as Lonergan puts it, is "the creation of a mental perspective, the introduction of a set of coordinates." He writes:

What Philip the Chancellor systematically posited was not the supernatural character of grace, for that was already known and acknowledged, but the validity of a line of reference termed nature. In the long term and in the

concrete, the real alternatives remain charity and cupidity, the elect and the *massa damnata*. But the whole problem lies in the abstract, in human thinking: the fallacy in early thought had been an unconscious confusion of the metaphysical abstraction 'nature' with concrete data which do not quite correspond: Philip's achievement was the creation of a mental perspective, the introduction of a set of coordinates, that eliminated the basic fallacy and its attendant host of anomalies.⁴ (2000, 17)

Philip's discovery of the theorem proved to be the key to Aquinas's working out of what is commonly known as the medieval synthesis, organizing the concrete data given by natural human experience in the religious dimension, together with the equally concrete dogmatic data given by patristic theology and especially Augustine, also evident in their experiential coordinates, into a coherent, well-ordered systematic and speculative whole, coherently sorting out the relations of grace to nature and of grace to human freedom in their lived reality, as experienced by the community of believers, according to an ancient adage affirmed once more in *Fides et ratio*, that "grace does not destroy nature but perfects it" (John Paul II 1998, 75).

In Aquinas, therefore, Lonergan concludes to "the fact that metaphysics and psychology, divine providence and human instrumentality, grace and nature at last have meshed their intricacies in synthesis" (2000, 147). He continues:

This fact of synthesis cannot perhaps be expressed, for synthesis in a field of data is like the soul in the body, everywhere at once, totally in each part and yet distinct from every part. But to be certain of the fact of synthesis is as easy as to be certain of the fact of soul. One has only to remove this or that vital organ and watch the whole structure tumble into ruin; the old unity and harmony will disappear, and in its place will arise the irreconcilable opposition of a multiplicity. Thus, to St Thomas cooperation was a theorem, something known by understanding the data already apprehended and not something known by adding a new datum to the apprehension, something like the principle of work and not something like another lever, something like the discovery of gravitation and not something like the discovery of America. Remove this key position and it becomes impossible to reconcile human instrumentality with human freedom. (2000, 147)

If, *ex hypothesi*, the theorem of the supernatural that proved to be the key position of the medieval synthesis is taken dialectically for the position, then the counterposition is

⁴ This first volume of Lonergan's *Collected Works* has two parts. Part One consists in a series of four articles published in *Theological Studies* in 1941–42, right after Lonergan completed his doctoral dissertation in 1940. In 1971, these four articles were republished in book form under the title, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971). The second part of Vol. 1 is the dissertation itself, *Gratia Operans: A Study of the Speculative Development in the Writings of St Thomas of Aquin*. For a precise and detailed account of the "concrete data" which "do not quite correspond" to the "metaphysical abstraction 'nature,'" the first of the four articles in *Theological Studies*, "Historical Background," is necessary; see 3–20; also see the "Concluding Summary," 143–49. Finally, the unsurpassed study of Lonergan's dissertation and related writings is Michael J. Stebbins, *The Divine Initiative: Grace, World-Order, and Human Freedom in the Early Writings of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

physicalism, also a synthesis, which organizes the data on the principle of causal closure or “the causal closure of the physical,” which implies that “if mental and other special causes are to produce physical effects, they must themselves be physically constituted. It thus [gives] rise to the strong physicalist doctrine that anything that has physical effects must itself be physical” (Papineau 2021; see Stoljar 2010; 2022).⁵ The alternatives are fully disjunctive. If the theorem of the supernatural is correct, then the causal closure of the physical must be incorrect, and vice versa. Excluded middle, dubious elsewhere, is fully in force here, with respect to these mutually exclusive alternatives. Lonergan, the medieval synthesis, and *Fides et ratio* belong to one synthetic understanding of what is going forward in the world, while Dennett and a majority of respondents to the 2020 PhilPapers Survey share a radically different synthetic understanding of what is going forward that completely withdraws credit from any notion of the supernatural. For physicalism, atheism is an unquestioned default position.

A third manifestation of general bias in contemporary philosophy is a nearly permanent agnosticism concerning the ontological or metaphysical notion of personhood. In addition to the general acknowledgement of some human beings being persons, there is the longstanding legal doctrine of corporate persons going all the way back to *Santa Clara County v. Southern Pacific Rail Road* in 1886; there are increasingly advocates for nonhuman animal persons, as in the instructive case of Happy, the elephant held captive in the Bronx Zoo (Wright 2022)⁶; there is the prospect many take seriously of eventual AI persons; and there is what we might think of as the third rail of all debates about personhood, the theory of fetal personhood. We are already accustomed to think of corporate persons as legal fictions. But for the reductionist philosopher Derek Parfit, in his influential book, *Reasons and Persons*, we can safely draw the inference that *any* ontological or metaphysical notion of personhood, as what Parfit calls a “further fact” beyond “our brains and bodies, and the doing of our deeds, and the thinking of our thoughts, and the occurrence of certain other mental and physical events” (1984, 216) is

⁵ It should be noticed that the distinction between “reductive” and “non-reductive” physicalism, the former reducing the mental to the physical by “type-identity” while the latter relies on “supervenience,” should not be confused with the distinction between “reductive” and “non-reductive” naturalism, to which I will briefly return below.

⁶ Steven Wise, the founder of Nonhuman Rights Project (NhRP), brought a habeas petition before New York Supreme Court Justice Alison Truitt to remove Happy from the Bronx Zoo to a sanctuary. If it had been granted, then Happy would have been a “person” with rights. Peter Singer supported the suit. He told Wright, “I think that’s entirely justifiable, in that we give legal status to nonhumans, like corporations, and also to humans who clearly lack the capacity to act on their own—to infants and to those with profound intellectual disabilities. We allow habeas-corpus writs for them. So I can’t see any reason why we shouldn’t allow them for animals whose mental capacities are similar or superior.” Wright also interviewed Martha Nussbaum, who agreed that Happy should have standing in court (see Nussbaum 2023). Wise lost his case on Feb. 18, 2020. Justice Truitt wrote, “This court agrees that Happy is more than just a legal thing, or property . . . She is an intelligent, autonomous being who should be treated with respect and dignity, and who may be entitled to liberty. Nonetheless, we are constrained by the caselaw to find that Happy is not a ‘person’ and is not being illegally imprisoned.” On the topical subject of animal personhood, the Kantian moral philosopher Christine Korsgaard (2018), in a serious departure from Kant, argues that “all sentient animals, that is, all animals who have subjective experiences that are pleasant or painful, . . . [are] what Kant called ‘ends-in-themselves,’” a term Kant himself reserved for “persons.”

bound to be fictive (1984, 199–347). The alternative Parfit considers is that personal identity resides in a disembodied Cartesian ego; but as David Papineau (2021) observes, “It is striking that nearly all contemporary views of the mind-brain relations are naturalist at least to the extent that they respect [the causal] closure thesis. Strongly interactionist views that allow the conscious mind to make an independent difference to the physical world have few defenders nowadays.” However, this very observation can also be taken as further evidence for general bias. When the only alternatives available for philosophical consideration are either reductionism or eliminativism and materialism, on the one hand, or, on the other hand, the implausible dualism of a disembodied Cartesian ego, John Kavanaugh, in *Who Count as Persons?*, writes that “the problem is the map . . . This offering of only two maps is a spurious dichotomy, a false dilemma.” In particular, he continues, “There is no habitat provided for phenomenology or the experience of the lived body” (2001, 30).

Continuing in this diagnostic vein, Patrick Murray and Jeanne Schuler, in *False Moves in Philosophy and Social Theory: Losing Public Purpose*, also trenchantly argue that what is missing from much if not most mainstream contemporary philosophy—what they call “factoring philosophy”—is “just enough phenomenology.” “Just Enough Phenomenology” is the title of their concluding chapter. They write, “False moves arise from phenomenological mistakes; they involve treating as separable what can be distinguished conceptually but is inseparable. . . . Employing a phrase coined by James Collins, we call these ‘purist splits’ . . . Most damagingly, factoring philosophy takes the subjective and the objective to be separable, positing the purely subjective and the purely objective” (2023, x). Kavanaugh, Murray, and Schuler should make us think again of Marilynne Robinson’s critique of Daniel Dennett, who “sheers off . . . subjectivity” and inwardness in the purist split that reduces religion to a cargo cult. Examples of philosophical analysis that are missing “just enough phenomenology” are abundant in contemporary philosophical literature, but there have also been prominent critiques of purist splits and the false moves they foster. The background sources on whom Murray and Schuler draw are Hegel, Marx, Heidegger, and Donald Davidson. Kavanaugh and Robinson lend further depth and weight to their general argument.

In the present context concerning personhood and personal identity, Kavanaugh writes in the same neighborhood as Murray and Schuler, and so too does Bernard Lonergan. In *Phenomenology and Logic*, Lonergan offers “[his] own definition” of phenomenology, based on his reading, most prominently, of Husserl, Heidegger, Gabriel Marcel, and Karl Jaspers: phenomenology is “an account, description, presentation of data structured by insight” (2001, 266). Concerning “the significance of phenomenology” (2001, 269–74), he writes,

[Its] first significance is that it provides a technique for the exploration and presentation of whole realms of matters of fact that are important but that have been neglected or treated superficially. In psychology, for example, that calls itself scientific, there is a bias in favor of outer data, in favor of what can be measured, in favor of events that can be counted. Phenomenology, as contrasted with scientific psychology in that sense, opens up new vistas and possibilities . . . So phenomenology appears as a break with scientific tendencies in psychology. . . . When you want to draw precise distinctions and get things accurately, there is needed a technique, and phenomenology provides such a technique. (270)

With respect to Lonergan's definition of "data structured by insight," the phenomenological technique he has foremost in mind is the disclosure of "data of consciousness" in addition to the "data of sense" (1992, 95–97, 206–7, 260–61, 299–300, 357–59). The phenomenological admission of data of consciousness, in turn, is crucial to the notion of interiority to which I have already alluded, and which will figure prominently in conclusion. But Lonergan's notion of "interiority" is not a Cartesian, solipsistic inwardness that violates Murray and Schuler's injunction against purist splits; in fact, it is *just the opposite*. Thus, when Lonergan moves on to the further significance of phenomenology, he discerns "a powerful instrument for philosophical psychology and philosophy" (2001, 272–74). His emphasis is virtually the same as Murray and Schuler's. He writes, "Just as the phenomenologist finds structured meanings in what is manifest, so for Heidegger a man is a source of meanings. He uses the term *Dasein to eliminate the subject-object opposition*" (2001, 272; emphasis added).

Lonergan fully shares this Heideggerian aim with Murray and Schuler. The ninth chapter of *False Moves* is entitled, "Setting Aside the Purely Subjective: Reclaiming the Discourse of Truth and Error." Murray and Schuler write, "Troubles arise when observations and concepts mutate into the exclusive disjunction of the *purely* objective and *purely* subjective" (2023, 233). "Pure subjectivity—not subjectivity—is a myth. Hegel, Marx, Heidegger, and Davidson reach this conclusion in various ways. What is called subjective or mental—sensation, thoughts, concepts, feelings, language—belong to persons existing in the world. Every thought and feeling reveals the world" (2023, 234). So it is that "Getting past the purist split between subjectivity and objectivity makes intellectual and existential integrity possible" (2023, 238). In a more extensive analysis, Murray and Schuler assign the counterposition to Thomas Nagel in his books, *Mortal Questions* (1979) and *The View From Nowhere* (1986). "Pure objectivity," the mutually exclusive counterpoint to "pure subjectivity," would be, impossibly, a "view from nowhere." On the other hand, Murray and Schuler write, "Missing from physicalist accounts of mind is what Nagel calls the view from within. The resources of science to understand consciousness are incomplete in principle. Individual awareness acts as a firewall against the encroachments of objectivity. But this self that defies objective accounting verges on a vanishing point. . . . The universe lacks a self; the self excludes the universe" (2023, 246). Hence, Murray and Schuler conclude, "One upshot of pitting subjectivity against objectivity is the emptying out of the self" (2023, 247); or what Lonergan, in *Method in Theology*, calls "the *Principle of the Empty Head*" (1972, 157). Advancing their position against Nagel's representation of the counterposition, Murray and Schuler write, "Pure subjectivity, like pure objectivity, is a myth, a stumbling block that philosophy must remove. . . . Without subjective activity, there would be no knowledge" (2023, 253).

The point of this discussion of phenomenology and so also subjectivity is to suggest that without a phenomenologically well-conceived notion of subjectivity that does not interpret subjectivity and objectivity to be mutually exclusive, a nearly permanent agnosticism concerning the ontological notion of personhood is virtually guaranteed. But Murray and Schuler pivot on a new maxim. They write, "In the discourse of truth and error," which they aim to recover, "the maxim the more subjective, the more objective replaces that of the discourse of the subjective and objective, whose maxim is: the less subjective the better" (2023, 253). The terminus of the latter maxim is what Davidson calls "the 'featureless self'" (Murray and Schuler 2023, 255). The featureless self is counter-positional to the notion of the person,

as, for example, Kavanaugh works it out in the first four chapters of *Who Count as Persons?*, beginning with the phenomenological recovery of one's own body as "subject" (2001, 34–36), "the 'my-ness' and 'me-ness' of a personal body" (2001, 39–42), a being endowed with "personal consciousness" (2001, 42–44) who can live in a "personalized world" (2001, 44–47). For Kavanaugh, a "person" is an "embodied self-conscious career." He writes, "A human person is not a brain, nor the contents of a brain. A human person is an integrated, embodied life . . . Likewise, a human person is not some pure consciousness or spirit or intellect but a special kind of animal" (2001, 47). Moreover, "We are personal animals because among our endowments is the capacity for awareness of our own act of awareness that makes us animals who are not only living a life but having a moral life" (2001, 47). What is more to be said is more than we can take on board in this essay, except to emphasize the pivot, upon which we can turn away from the false alternatives of reductionism and Cartesian dualism by way of a phenomenological recovery of the subject, such as Murray and Schuler work out, and such as Lonergan works out. Accordingly, in Lonergan's thought, we would be led to the dicta familiar to his readers, which in a way are summaries of his thought as a whole, when he writes in *Method in Theology* that "objectivity is . . . the consequence of authentic subjectivity" (1972, 265) and that "Genuine objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity" (1972, 292). Lonergan's fundamental elaboration of the notion of objectivity appears in *Insight*, in the chapter entitled, "The Notion of Objectivity" (1992, 399–409).

A Critique of Naturalism

To this point, it has been argued that contemporary philosophy is liable to a nearly complete separation of philosophy from theology, a nearly total withdrawal of credit from the notion of the supernatural, and a nearly permanent agnosticism concerning the metaphysical notion of personhood. Certainly, these consequences follow for physicalism and atheism, but naturalism is perhaps more difficult to characterize as a counterposition, because a naturalistic outlook is not necessarily reductive, and there are non-reductive, pluralist, liberal, and humanist versions of naturalism as well, which are arguably more congenial to phenomenology, subjectivity, and the plural modes of human experience, including religious experience. For Murray and Schuler, the obvious example would be Marx, who is among the essential background figures of *False Moves*.

Another example is John Dewey. So, before coming to a final Lonerganian conclusion concerning general bias and its time in thought, I will briefly reconsider the path opened up by Vincent Punzo, based on a sustained reading of Dewey, on the way to an "open naturalism," which he proposed in his book *Reflective Naturalism* (1969). But the upshot of this consideration of Punzo will turn out to reinforce rather than undermine the requirement of something like the theorem of the supernatural even to satisfy Dewey's own sense of being sustained by nature as an enveloping whole upon which to draw for the meaning, value, and purpose of lives well lived. The recently departed Richard Bernstein (d. 2022), a prominent American philosopher who carries on in the tradition of a "liberal naturalism" like Dewey's, Sellars's, and McDowell's (2020, 29–57), begins his book, *Pragmatic Naturalism: John Dewey's Living Legacy*, by recognizing that even Dewey's "modern version of Aristotelian naturalism" rejects "any appeal to or acceptance of what is supernatural or otherwise transcendent to the natural world" (2020, 5). But in Punzo's account, this is its liability.

David Papineau (2021), writing encyclopedically of contemporary naturalism, refers to the nearly universal acceptance of the causal closure thesis, but he begins his Stanford Encyclopedia article by writing that “the term naturalism has no very precise meaning in contemporary philosophy.” Looking back to “the first half of the last century,” he mentions Dewey, who embraced and argued for a naturalistic outlook. But if we turn to Dewey, we should immediately distinguish between reductive naturalism on the one hand, which is tantamount to physicalism, and nonreductive naturalism on the other hand, which Dewey in *Experience and Nature*, calls naturalistic humanism (1981, 10), sounding uncannily like Marx writing eight decades earlier in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. Marx had written, “man is not merely a natural being: he is a *human* natural being. That is to say, he is a being for himself. Therefore, he is a *species being*” (1964, 182).⁷

The present point of quoting such passages is fourfold. First, neither Dewey nor Marx is a “materialist” in the sense of Democritus, Epicurus, Lucretius, Hobbes, the French Encyclopedists, Feuerbach, or Otto Neurath and Rudolf Carnap, who first introduced the term “physicalism” into philosophy (Stoljar 2010, 10).⁸ Second, both Dewey and Marx are “Hegelian” philosophers, which means in context that they both criticize the purist split between subjectivity and objectivity and they both incorporate “just enough phenomenology.” In fact, John Shook and James Good, in *John Dewey’s Philosophy of Spirit*, which includes Dewey’s “1897 Lecture on Hegel,” write that “Dewey’s mature philosophy can be seen to be a type of . . . left Hegelianism” (2010, ix).⁹ Third, Dewey’s and Marx’s historically minded philosophical humanism based on their appropriation of Hegel constitutes a bridge from their naturalism to the Hegelian ways of thinking present in Murray, Schuler, Kavanaugh, and Lonergan (for Lonergan, see Morelli 2020).¹⁰ Finally, their philosophical humanism overcomes a permanent agnosticism concerning the ontology of the person; it is not reductionistic; it does not treat the notion of personhood as a local convention or fiction; and it is not caught in a bind between Descartes and Hume.

⁷ Marx also writes, “Here we see how consistent naturalism or humanism distinguishes itself both from idealism and materialism, constituting at the same time the unifying truth of both” (1964, 181). And again, with respect to the fourth meaning he assigns to the term, communism: “This communism, as fully developed naturalism, equals humanism, and as fully developed humanism equals naturalism” (1964, 135).

⁸ In the *Journal of Philosophy* (42 [19]) in 1945, Dewey answers the question, “Are Naturalists Materialists?” in the negative (the essay is co-signed by Dewey, Sidney Hook, and Ernest Nagel; see Morgenbesser 1977, 385–400).

⁹ With respect to the aims of this essay, it should be noted that although both Marx and Dewey are atheists, each has a critique of atheism; for Marx, see 1964, 145–46; for Dewey, see Shook and Good 2010, 39–41; also see Dewey 1986.

¹⁰ Murray and Schuler are openly Hegelian philosophers. Kavanaugh wrote his doctoral dissertation at Washington University on Hegel, Marx, and Marcuse. If Hegel is present in the text of *Who Count as Persons?*, it is a submerged and implicit presence, but both Marcuse and Marx explicitly inform his text in a positive way. For Marcuse, see 2001, 20–21. For Marx, see 2001, 145. And it will not seem odd to refer to Lonergan as a “Hegelian” philosopher after reading Morelli 2020. If it is more natural and also quite accurate to refer to Kavanaugh and Lonergan as phenomenological or personalist Thomists, like John Paul II, then perhaps we should be open to the possibility that Thomism and Hegelianism are not absolutely opposed. Lonergan’s thought would be a case in point.

Still, it would take much more work to find Dewey and Marx inside *Fides et ratio* when John Paul II unequivocally criticizes both Marxism and pragmatism. But let us suppose that Kavanaugh and John Paul II share in common their commitment to a personalist, phenomenological Thomism. With this orientation in mind, we can consider a remarkable and perhaps unsuspected comment Dewey makes about the medieval synthesis. In *Unmodern Philosophy and Modern Philosophy*, he writes, “If the union of Greek naturalism and [the] Jewish-Christian supernatural had not actually taken place and maintained itself in theological philosophy and in institutional practice for centuries, it would have been asserted in advance to be inherently impossible” (2012, 63).¹¹ But since it did take place and is therefore not inherently impossible, it ought rather to be called astonishing. The concluding question would be whether the sort of nonreductive, non-physicalist naturalism we find in Marx and Dewey can open onto a theological horizon rather than foreclosing on the theorem of the supernatural. Thus, I have one more step to take before turning back to Lonergan in conclusion.

Punzo concludes *Reflective Naturalism*, a book deeply indebted to Dewey’s naturalism, with a chapter called “Toward an Open Ethical Naturalism.” Dewey had written *A Common Faith* in 1934 in part because he believed that if militant atheism were to succeed in eliminating religion, something vital to culture and humanity would be lost. But he also believed that a sense of what he called “natural piety” could be sufficient to compensate and offset such a loss, within the confines of what Punzo calls a “closed naturalism,” as opposed to the “open naturalism” he defends in his concluding chapter. Punzo’s critique of Dewey’s notion of “natural piety” is sharp and incisive. He writes:

If nature is taken out of the context of being the work of a Personal God, all talk about man being sustained by the sense of an enveloping whole, and of being engaged with nature in a common career and destiny becomes pure metaphor, with no substance behind it. For then the whole becomes a whole of “things,” “objects” that can be manipulated or used by man. It is difficult to see how mankind can be said to be engaged in a common career or destiny with chemicals, stones, or vegetables. The subjectivity that is implicated in being a man seems to alienate him from the rest of nature when the rest of

¹¹ This is the book manuscript Dewey purportedly lost in the back of a New York taxi in 1947, painstakingly reconstructed from the archives by Phillip Deen. Here is a fuller context for the passage just quoted: “From a technically philosophical point of view, the outstanding trait—the all but miraculous feature—of the medieval synthesis is that it adopted the essential naturalism of the cosmic formulations of Aristotle and then fitted it into a super-natural system in which it was made to take a subordinate but still indispensably necessary place. The same sort of thing happened upon the side of method of statement. The medieval synthesis in its most highly integrated form, and the form finally officially sanctioned, taught that principles which are fundamental and ultimate are so far above human reason that they are possessed by human beings only by virtue of supernatural revelation and are capable of being retained in their purity only through the intervention of a supernaturally founded and directed institution. Nevertheless when the revelation is once made it is possible as well as desirable to show that its contents are in accord with reason” (2012, 63). This seems like a fair summation. If the medieval synthesis had not happened, Dewey suggests, it would have been deemed, not incoherent or contradictory, but impossible! That Dewey’s positive assessment of the medieval synthesis is not inadvertent is underscored as well by his claim that it “is also an intimate and vital constituent of contemporary culture so that the reference which is made to it in these pages is anything but antiquarian” (2012, 63).

nature is seen to be a mindless process or dumb objects. There can be no sharing between man and nature so considered. Martin Buber's distinction between the I-Thou relationship, which is a relationship between persons, and the I-It relationship, which is a relationship between a person and the world of things, is important to the criticism of Dewey's position. (1969, 356)

The metaphor of nature as a sustaining, enveloping whole has gained considerable ground since the mid-twentieth-century days of Dewey and Punzo. Still, sometimes a stone is just a stone, a carrot is only a carrot. If the human community is an integral part and a member of the biotic community, as Pope Francis affirms in *Laudato si'* (2015)—or “On Care for Our Common Home”—this is because God is present in the whole of creation. Dewey was raised with something like this conviction, but by the time he began teaching at the University of Michigan, his childhood faith had slipped away.

Punzo continues:

Without a God, all talk of the infinite import of man's acts is, in the last analysis, empty rhetoric. Without God, man's life is a passing affair in a world of passing events, which are neither hostile nor friendly to him; it is a world that is mindlessly “there.” Without God, man's life is a chain of events fluctuating between fulfillments and frustrations, leading nowhere but to the silence of the grave. Without God, the feeling of natural piety as “the sense of the permanent and inevitable implication of nature and man in a common career and destiny,” is seen to be lacking philosophical grounding. (1969, 364)

Thinking with Punzo, for Dewey's idiom of natural piety to be philosophically well-grounded rather than empty rhetoric, human beings would have to be “seen to be an I”—that is, persons—“who through [their] works and activity in nature, as well as through [their] dealing with other [people], [are] responding to and sharing in the life of an Eternal Thou” (1969, 359). These remarks are not necessarily intended to offend neo-paganism or nature worship, but they are intended to be humanistic and personalist.

Conclusion: Lonergan on Interiority and the Third Stage of Meaning

To begin to move in this personalist direction, however, the first step, as argued above, would be “just enough phenomenology.” The second step would follow: the elimination of the purist split between the purely subjective and the purely objective. The third step would be to recover Marilynne Robinson's recuperated, non-dualist, non-Cartesian notion of “subjectivity” and “inwardness,” or what Lonergan (1972) terms “interiority.” These steps would be necessary, in turn, to surmount the general bias of our time in thought and enter into what Lonergan posits as a “third stage of meaning” (1972, 85–99).

In the third chapter of *Method in Theology*, entitled “Meaning,” Lonergan (1972) works out his thesis of three stages of meaning. The first stage is common sense. In the second stage, common-sense understanding is differentiated from scientific understanding and the sciences become autonomous.

Recognizing the autonomy of scientific methods and research (their emancipation from the tutelage of philosophy and theology) is unquestionably a progressive gain. At the same

time, Lonergan illustrates the disjunction or alienation between common sense and scientific knowledge with the example of Eddington's two tables: "the bulky, solid, colored desk at which he worked, and the manifold of colorless 'wavicles' so minute that the desk was mostly empty space" (1972, 84, 258, 274). For Lonergan, for whom there is only one table, Eddington's two tables illustrate the move from the "undifferentiated consciousness" (1972, 84, 258–59, 274) of common sense to the "troubled consciousness" that arises when one confronts the disparity between what Wilfrid Sellars (1962) calls the "manifest" *versus* the "scientific image" in his essay, "Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man." Lonergan thinks of this disparity and the corresponding head-scratching conundrum to which it gives rise as an artifact of "troubled consciousness." The development he outlines moves from the undifferentiated consciousness of the first stage of meaning to the troubled consciousness characterizing the second stage, and then to the prospective resolution of the trouble by way of achieving a differentiated consciousness whose ground is the interiority of a knowing and self-appropriated subject. Lonergan writes, "Troubled consciousness emerges when an Eddington contrasts his two tables . . . Differentiated consciousness appears when the critical exigence turns attention upon interiority, when self-appropriation is achieved, when the subject relates his different procedures to the several realms [of meaning], relates the several realms to one another, and consciously shifts from one realm to another by consciously changing his procedures" (1972, 84).

The keywords in this quotation are "interiority" and "self-appropriation." A differentiated consciousness differentiates between the object that is pursued in inquiry and the subject, *oneself*, who undertakes to inquire. In his essay, "Self-Appropriation: Lonergan's Pearl of Great Price," James L. Marsh writes that the "main purpose" of Lonergan's *Insight* is "self-appropriation, the cognitive and existential taking possession of oneself as a knower, chooser, actor, and lover in relation to being" (2014, 3). Taking possession of oneself, for Lonergan, requires our interior performance and habitual practice of a dynamic series of "transcendental precepts"; he writes, "Our formula is a continuous and ever more exacting application of the transcendental precepts. Be attentive, Be intelligent, Be reasonable, Be responsible" (1972, 231). These precepts govern the levels of Lonergan's cognitional theory: on the level of experience, to pay attention and ask questions; on the level of understanding, to formulate perspicacious concepts and propositions in answer to our questions; on the level of judgment, to affirm whether what we understand is also true, to give our "yes" and "no"; and on the level of decision, not only to take possession of, but to take responsibility for our own operations and acts. Self-appropriation, the disciplined practice of these precepts, is a matter of "genuineness" (1992, 499–504) or "authenticity" (1972, 104 *et passim*). Whereas specialized empirical knowledge is the aim of the specialized empirical sciences, the aim of philosophy is self-knowledge, self-appropriation, genuineness, or authenticity, especially of a philosophy with high relevance to religious experience and theological understanding.

Once the sciences have won their appropriate and legitimate autonomy, of course, there can be no simple return to the medieval synthesis, which could only be a revanchist, recidivist, reactionary move. So the question necessarily arises as to how the sort of philosophy adumbrated in this paper can go forward. Lonergan writes,

Now the emergence of the autonomous sciences has repercussions on philosophy. Since the sciences between them undertake the explanation of all

sensible data, one may conclude with the positivists that the function of philosophy is to announce that philosophy has nothing to say. Since philosophy has no theoretic function, one may conclude with the linguistic analysts that the function of philosophy is to work out a hermeneutics for the clarification of the local variety of everyday language. But there remains the possibility—and it is our option—that philosophy is neither a theory in the manner of science nor a somewhat technical form of common sense, nor even a reversal to Presocratic wisdom. Philosophy finds its proper data in intentional consciousness. Its primary function is to promote the self-appropriation that cuts to the root of philosophic differences and incomprehensions. (1972, 94–95)

In setting up the primary position of intentional consciousness in philosophical investigations, Lonergan proceeds to write of a systematic, a critical, a methodical, and a transcendent exigence. He writes:

[To] meet fully the systematic exigence only reinforces the critical exigence. Is common sense just primitive ignorance to be brushed aside with an acclaim to science as the dawn of intelligence and reason? Or is science of merely pragmatic value, teaching us how to control nature, but failing to reveal what nature is? Or, for that matter, is there any such thing as human knowing? So man is confronted with the three basic questions: What am I doing when I am knowing? Why is doing that knowing? What do I know when I do it? With these questions one turns from the outer realms of common sense and theory to the appropriation of one's own interiority, one's subjectivity, one's operations, their structure, their norms, their potentialities. Such appropriation, in its technical expression, resembles theory. But in itself it is a heightening of intentional consciousness, an attending not merely to objects but to the intending subject and his acts. And as this heightened consciousness constitutes the evidence for one's account of knowledge, such an account by the proximity of the evidence differs from all other expression. The withdrawal into interiority is not an end in itself. From it one returns to the realms of common sense and theory with the ability to meet the methodical exigence. For self-appropriation of itself is a grasp of transcendental method, and that grasp provides one with the tools not only for any analysis of common-sense procedures but also for the differentiation of the sciences and the construction of their methods. (1972, 83)

What is meant by phenomenology in this context is the “heightening of intentional consciousness” and “an attending not merely to objects but to the intending subject and his acts.” The aim of this heightened attention is “self-appropriation.” If it requires a “withdrawal into interiority,” such a withdrawal is “not an end in itself” but the basis upon which the differentiated consciousness of knowing subjects can be in the world and they can know where they are, what they are doing there, and where they are headed as thinkers, knowers, and actors.

Consequently, Lonergan writes:

It is by knowledge making its bloody entrance that one can move out of the realm of ordinary languages into the realm of theory and the totally different scientific apprehension of reality. It is only through the long and confused twilight of philosophic initiation that one can find one's way into interiority and achieve through self-appropriation a basis, a foundation, that is distinct from common sense and theory, that acknowledges their disparateness, that accounts for both and critically grounds them both. . . . In a third stage [of meaning], the modes of common sense and theory remain, science asserts its autonomy from philosophy, and there occur philosophies that leave theory to science and take their stand on interiority. (1972, 85)

Taking a stand with Lonergan, my suggestion has been that philosophies that take their stand on interiority do not appear in the three-dimensional manifestation of general bias characterizing our time in thought—the nearly complete separation of philosophy from theology; the nearly total withdrawal of credit from the notion of the supernatural; and a nearly permanent agnosticism concerning the ontological or metaphysical notion of personhood.

If physicalism, metaphilosophical naturalism, and atheism are the dominant and prevailing tendencies in professional and academic philosophy today, then Frederick Lawrence is bound to be correct that *Fides et ratio* makes a case for philosophy for “a world that no longer exists.” Whether, as Rorty once put it, this is “a world well lost,” or a world we may yet hope to recover and renew, it is undoubtedly a striking provocation to the Catholic and Jesuit university.

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