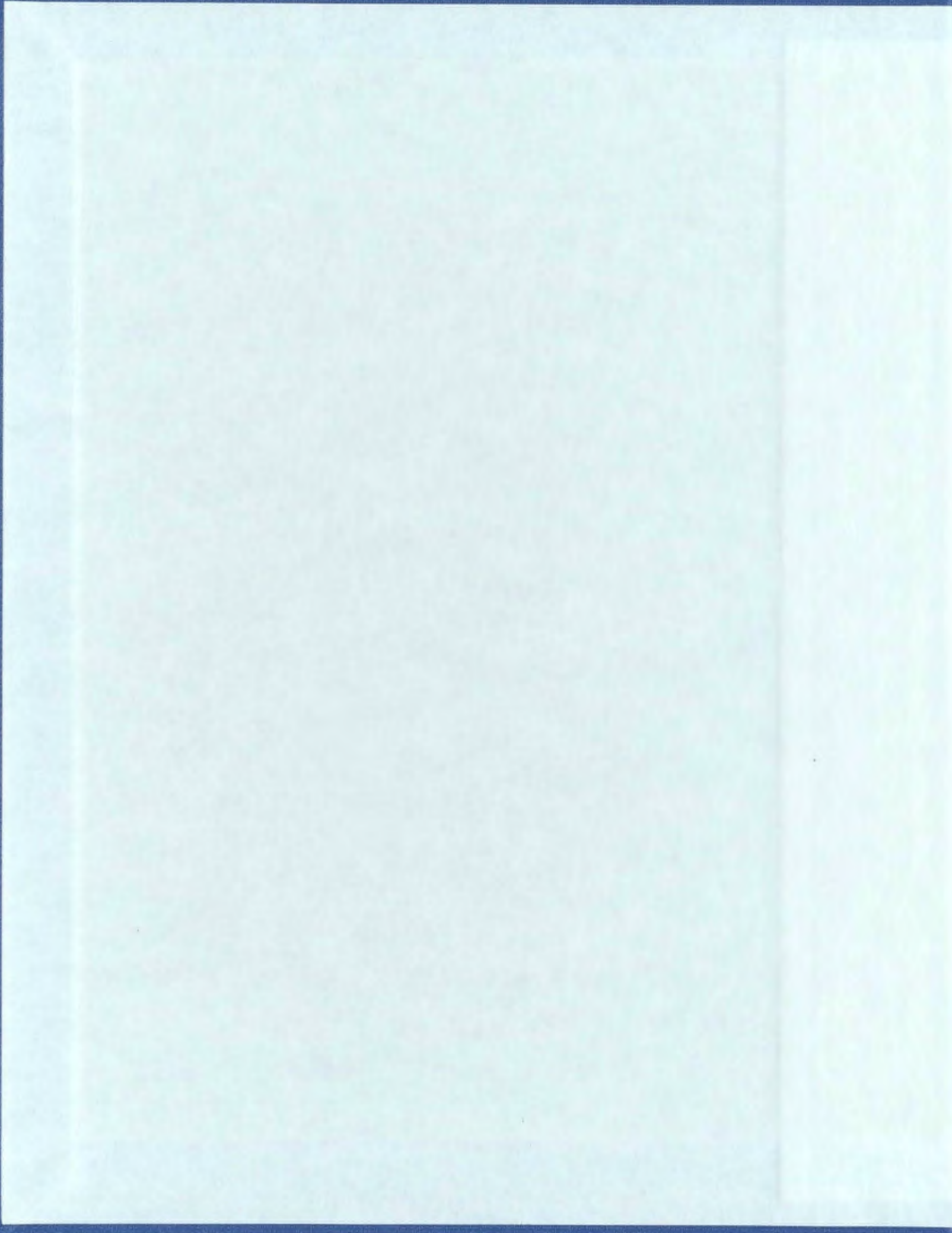# FEMINIST THEOLOGY, CHRISTIANITY AND THE PROBLEM OF PATRIARCHY: TOWARD AN ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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FEMINIST THEOLOGY, CHRISTIANITY AND THE PROBLEM OF PATRIARCHY:

TOWARD AN ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVE

by

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A thesis submitted to the

School of Graduate Studies

in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Religious Studies

Memorial University of Newfoundland

January 2010

St. John's   Newfoundland

For Mom and Dad

Quotation

It [Christianity] seems a very male way of thinking of God (which is a biased judgment against men): God is one who is objective to us, over-against us, and separate from us. It comports much better with my feminist sense of reality and my feminist ethic to conceive of God as being within us, moving between us and indeed ... coming into being with us.

- Daphne Hampson, "Is There a Place for Feminists in the Catholic Church?" *New Blackfriars* 68 no.801 (January 1987): p. 12

It [religious love] is a state that, once reached, is distinct from, prior to, and principle of subsequent judgments of value and acts of loving. It is the fulfillment of [a person's] capacity for self-transcendence, and as fulfillment, it brings deep-set joy and a profound peace. It radiates through the whole of one's living and acting, opening one's horizon to the full, purifying one's intentional responses to values, rectifying one's scale of preference, underpinning one's judgments of value, simplifying issues by moving them to a deeper level, and strengthening one to achieve the good in the face of evil.... Such being in love is religious.

- Lonergan, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: Philosophical and Theological Papers, 1958-1964*, edited by Fred Crowe and Robert Doran. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996. p. 20.

Abstract

For the last fifty years, feminists have debated whether a feminist Christian theology is even achievable. Post-Christian feminists maintain that it is impossible to reverse the 'sexist society' permeating Christianity, while reformist theologians struggle with how to articulate a commitment to feminism in spite of it. The aim of this thesis is to recast the debate in an effort to reconcile feminism and faith. Bernard Lonergan's dialectical philosophy provides a useful framework for reworking the basic tensions between Christian and post-Christian feminists. In particular, the historico-religious triad of progress, decline, and redemption reconstructs patriarchy as a symptom of a broader form of systemic bias that is reversible through knowledge born of faith. By way of philosophical exegesis, the objective is to bolster the particular aims of reformist feminism, namely recovery from gender bias, and show that there is a place for feminists in the Church. The remote goal is to develop an alternative existential critique of patriarchy that is legitimate in both the secular and theological realms and contribute to the task of bridging the gap between faith, traditional religion, and feminism.

Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to my seemingly tireless supervisor, Dr. Michael Shute, whose persistence, attention to detail, and guidance allowed me to persevere through what appeared to be painstaking obstacles.

I would like to thank my parents Albert and Joyce Bishop, who have written graduate theses themselves. Your thoughtfulness and encouragement throughout my toughest moments made me realize the importance of not giving up as you have never given up on me. My mother deserves special recognition for her editorial contributions and, in particular, the hours she spent perched over multiple cacophonies of incoherent paragraphs attempting to disseminate Lonergan's dialectical social philosophy! Thank-you, mom, for being so selfless and available at various hours to provide the much needed 'pushing' and solid support during this process. It is because of you both that this thesis is finally complete.

I extend my appreciation to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for their financial support. A special thank-you to Dr. Hans Rollmann for being instrumental in my success in obtaining funding and, along with Dr. David Hawkin and Dr. Kim Parker, thank-you for your kindness, feedback, references and support throughout course-work and the program.

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Introduction

For the last fifty years, feminists have hotly debated whether a feminist Christian theology is even possible. Valerie Saiving characterizes the negative position succinctly: Christian theology "is not adequate to the universal human situation [because] it does not allow women to be both women *and* full human beings."[1] In this view, a woman cannot be both a Christian and a feminist. Yet there are feminist theologians who disagree. These theologians struggle with how to articulate a commitment to both feminism and Christian faith. In this thesis, I hope to contribute, as a philosopher of religion, to the hopeful aims of the latter group. Using Bernard Lonergan's social philosophy, specifically his dialectic of history, the aim is to provide an alternative view of that which stands at the center of the disagreement, namely the working definition of gender bias. The aim is to recast the debate and moved toward reconciliation. What follows is a brief overview of the relevance of tackling this particular question, the method directing the overall work, the contribution of the thesis to both Lonergan studies and feminist theology, and an outline of the structure of the thesis.

i.i Establishing Relevance

Academically, the matter is difficult to resolve because it involves a range of controversial views. Post-Christian feminists assert that Christianity is irredeemably patriarchal – to remain within the church is to legitimate patriarchy, in theory and praxis.

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[1] Valerie Saiving, "The Human Situation: A Feminine View," *Journal of Religion* (1960) as cited in Angela Pears, *Feminist Christian Encounters: The Methods and Strategies of Feminist Informed Christian Theologies* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), p. 13. See also Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow, eds., W*omanspirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979).

Women's empowerment and liberation come to fruition only by breaking away from the traditional religions to create woman-Church and Thea/logy.[2] Christian theologians acknowledge that effectively incorporating legitimate feminist criticism of Christian patriarchal structures and practices is a difficult task, agreeing, "A feminist must experience Christianity as deeply problematic."[3] Yet, reformists are more hopeful about the prospects for the reform of the Christian churches along feminist lines, and they primarily engage to affect crucial transformation by working from within the structures of the church. They believe Christianity is "one religious culture among others that is open to feminist restatement."[4]

This debate has cast feminist theology into question and the post-Christian and reformist feminist attempts to contribute to secular critiques, and to generate theories of patriarchy to justify their positions, have been subject to extensive examination. Indeed, Saiving engendered the ideological grounds on what was to become a displacement of some feminist theologians to the periphery of feminist scholarship. The value of these contributions, however, is not my immediate concern. Rather, I consider the existential consequences of the displacement of feminist scholarship to the periphery of prime importance. Freedom is important. If one excludes faith in feminism, then one excludes the whole woman of faith from feminism and in fact may alienate her from the self she would like to be. Christian women believe in God, perhaps a specific God, and this belief

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[2] Rosemary Radford Ruether & Daphne Hampson, "Is There a Place for Feminists in the Catholic Church?" *New Blackfriars* 68 no.801 (January 1987): 7-24, p. 8. For an expanded version of the debate also see, Daphne Hampson, ed., *Swallowing a Fishbone? Feminist Theologians Debate Christianity* (London: SPCK Press, 1996).

[3] *Ibid.,* p. 8.

[4] *Ibid.,* p. 15.

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is manifest in Christian doctrine and the practice of charity and mercy. Their beliefs and their faith are integral to their experience, their intellectual horizon, and their praxis. They consider faith as an intricate, yet very real, component of their understanding of themselves as feminists, Christians, human beings, and women. For some, eliminating Christian faith would alienate them from "le sentiment de l'existence" – the direct moral contact with oneself.[5] I believe that the many existential implications and tensions inherent in this debate imply restrictions on freedom. Thus, a reworking of what defines faith-based values, an effort that may allow women to fulfill self-realization and achieve authenticity, is to be integral to our discussion.

> Being true to myself means being true to my own
> originality, which is something only I can articulate and
> discover. In articulating it, I am also defining myself. I am
> realizing a potentiality that is properly my own. This is the
> background understanding to the modern ideal of
> authenticity in which the ideal is usually couched.[6]

i.ii The Task at Hand

To rework a debate born in the 1960s, reexamined in 1980's and ongoing in 2009 is difficult. The tension among personal authenticity, Christian faith, feminism, and the Church has become increasing difficult in the contemporary climate of post-modern, post-Christian analyses. Questions arise: some consider spirituality disconcerting. Is undertaking a theological argument a self-indulgent exercise? Is faith a self-indulgent act or, worse, a meaningless search for meaning? Yet, regardless of what is a worthy contribution in a theoretical sense, Christian faith and spirituality remain very real to

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[5] See David Gauthier, *Rousseau: The Sentiment of Existence* (London: Cambridge University Press), 2006.
[6] Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 31.

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some feminists. As Janet Soskice states, "Feminism has caused me to anguish over actions and attitudes of the churches, has made me suspicious of various representations of Christian teaching, but [the choice] to give up on Christian faith ... would not be a matter of reasons alone."[7] The question, 'why are you still a Christian?' may echo the question, 'why are you still in love?' Many women anxiously turn inward, reviewing the nature and extent to which not only faith but also feminism itself is fulfilling and purposeful. In this light, I believe Christian women cannot, or at least should not have to, bracket faith away while they are feminists any more than they can stop being feminists when they are in church. Other questions therefore arise: does feminism fully include women of faith? Is the abandonment of traditional religion by post-Christian feminists effectively excluding women of faith from the feminist community?

This is not to 'trouble' feminism. Indeed, Christianity is patriarchal. Christianity is problematic. Christianity is sexist. Yet, I do not believe it is irredeemably so. This is the case not because the existential consequences are profoundly alienating but because a particular social philosophy allows us to recast this debate with the aim of reconceptualizing the major notions that act as barriers in the debate. Along the same lines of Hampson's and Daly's efforts to gentrify "religion" to carve out a safe space for feminism in the 1960's and 1970's, I aim to gentrify feminist critiques of patriarchy and the notions grounding the debate to carve out a safe space for faith in the 21st century. This effort involves re-conceptualizing gender bias, patriarchy and faith, and articulating a normative notion of authentic self-acceptance grounded in religion that is in line with

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[7] Janet Martin Soskice, "Turning the Symbols," in *Swallowing a Fishbone ? Feminist Theologians Debate Christianity*, ed. Daphne Hampson (London: SPCK Press, 1996), p. 17.

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feminist principles. Reconciling Christianity and feminism by showing that faith is integral to being both an authentic human being and an authentic feminist is my intention. Further, though this present work is neither confessional nor theological, I feel the fundamental experience of existential tension that emerges in this discourse is a valid and hopeful start for restructuring the debate within feminism about Christianity. Living authentically in the tension between feminist criticism and Christian faith may in fact lead to a greater freedom and, perhaps, a fuller humanity, where women may fully realize their relationship with their potential selves.

While there certainly have been efforts to reconcile Christianity and feminism, and we will explore examples below, the debate within feminist circles focuses on the incompatibility between Christianity and feminism, and the lack of common ground among feminists themselves. This approach has not resolved the issue. We need to re-examine its merits. I propose to explore the tension between feminism and Christianity to discover if there is any common ground between Christian and post- Christian feminists, intellectually and existentially. My basic premise is that we need to take seriously the claims and concerns of *both* Christian feminists and post-Christian feminists. We need to promote the idea of authenticity with neither uncritical acceptance, nor wholesale condemnation of the idea. Remotely, what we are in search of is a solid foundation for those feminists who *choose* to live according to Christian values. To discover such a foundation is eradicate the notion that it is an inherent contradiction to be a Christian feminist. This would not remove the real, lived, existential tension of Christian feminists. Contradictions do exist, though I argue they are not due to an actual inherent sexism. The

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tension, rather, is historically and concretely manifest in individuals and in communities and it will only work itself out over time. Given the complexity of the issue, for the present, I consider only one promising approach that might hasten our collective journey towards the remote goal.[8]

My approach assumes that the post-Christian feminist claim that it is impossible to be both a feminist and a Christian is false. I argue that this position is restrictive and renders the Christian feminist without freedom of faith or choice. The problem of the tension between criticism and faith is resolved by eliminating one pole of the tension. Thus, it fails to acknowledge an essential dimension of the real lived experience of Christian women. This critical issue has become, in my view, a question of a basic human freedom. There is a deep irony here, for central to contemporary feminism is the project of recovery, freedom, and acknowledging the real experiences of woman repressed in all patriarchal systems. I contend that feminism must develop a solid structure for faith-based values and create an inclusive space for the religious dynamics of human living within the framework of a feminist critique of patriarchy. This is my aim.

i.iii Methodology

The review of the pertinent feminist literature illustrates the difficulty of finding an effective foundation for bridging faith-based values and secular feminist critiques of patriarchy. Somewhat at the margins of the debate, a small group of feminists influenced

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[8] See Lonergan's law of genuineness in *Insight: Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan,* vol. 3, ed. Robert E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, chapter XV (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), pp. 499-503.

by the work of the Canadian philosopher and theologian Bernard Lonergan has addressed

this issue.[9] Lonergan's work has been influential in Catholic philosophical and

theological circles and has slowly made significant inroads in a number of fields

including the philosophy of science, economics, literary criticism, aesthetics, biblical

criticism, historiography, and psychology. Some feminist scholars have used Lonergan's

philosophy as a resource since 1975, when Denise Lardner Carmody published "Feminist

Redemption: Doris Lessing and Bernard Lonergan."[10] In 1982, in *Feminism &*

Christianity: A Two-way Reflection, Carmody explored the convergence of Christianity

and feminism, arguing that theism adds a positive dimension to feminism. The following

year, Patricia Wilson-Kastner used Lonergan to ground chapter two of her *Faith,*

Feminism & the Christ. She asks the question: Can one be *both* Christian and feminist?

Kastner, assuming Lonergan's theory is crucial for the development of a feminist

epistemology, appropriates his cognitional theory to analyze the epistemological

assumptions of Kant and Descartes, both frequent targets of secular feminists.

The publication of *Lonergan and Feminism* in 1994 was a significant event within

the Lonergan community. Carmody's "Lonergan's Transcendental Precepts and the

Foundations of Christian Feminist Ethics," explored how conceptualizing the precepts:

Be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, be responsible, and be in love, as foundations

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[9] See Cynthia Crysdale, ed., *Lonergan and Feminism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994).
(hereafter *Lonergan and Feminism*)

[10] The earliest use of Lonergan as a feminist resource is in Joseph Flanagan, "The Basic Patterns of Human Understanding According to Bernard Lonergan" (January 1, 1967). *ETD Collection for Fordham University*. Paper AAI6711490. http://fordham.bepress.com/dissertations/AAI6711490

for a Christian feminist ethic.[11] Similarly, in "Authentic Feminist Doctrine," Tad Dunne

explored Lonergan's notion of 'consciousness-raising' to sort through the many

conflicting feminist 'doctrines'.[12] His aim was to find which are authentic, and from there

to work toward a normative notion of women's well-being. Because Lonergan defined

authenticity as obedience to exigencies for raising questions, the transcendental precepts

play a central role in Dunne's work.[13] Charles C. Hefling's article "On the Possible

Relevance of Lonergan's Thought to Some Feminist Questions in Christology" is

sympathetic to the academic and existential tensions between Christian faith and

feminism.[14] Cognizant that the theological explanation of Jesus' person and work are

problematic in feminist theology, Hefling asks whether Lonergan's Christology is

compatible with feminism. In this light, Hefling makes use of Lonergan's notions of

religious conversion and redemption to resolve the issue.

Paulette Kidder's "Woman of Reason: Lonergan and Feminist Epistemology,"

Elizabeth A Morelli's "Women's Intuition: A Lonerganian Analysis," and Cynthia S.W.

Crysdale's "Women and Social Construction of Self-Appropriation" are central to the

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[11] Denise Lardner Carmody, "Lonergan's Transcendental Precepts and the Foundations of Christian Feminist Ethics," in *Lonergan and Feminism*, ed. Cynthia Crysdale (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), pp. 134-145.

[12] Tad Dunne, "Authentic Feminist Doctrine," in *Lonergan and Feminism*, ed. Cynthia Crysdale (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994). pp. 114-133.

[13] In "Emergent Probability and the Ecofeminist Critique of Hierarchy," in in *Lonergan and Feminism*, ed. Cynthia Crysdale (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), pp. 146-174, Michael Shute focuses on Lonergan's notions of human consciousness, emergent probability, and his understanding of 'nature' in its hierarchical structure in order to better understand the eco-feminist critique of 'the great chain of being'. Mary Frohlich, on the other hand, deals with the use of gender analogies within theological discourse, in "From Mystification to Mystery: Lonergan and the Theological Significance of Sexuality," in *Lonergan and Feminism*, ed. Cynthia Crysdale (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), pp. 175-198. Part two of her article employs anthropological and methodical principles to refine feminist distinctions of 'sex' and 'gender.'

[14] Charles C. Hefling, Jr., "On the Possible Relevance of Lonergan's Thought to Some feminist Questions in Christology," in in *Lonergan and Feminism*, ed. Cynthia Crysdale (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), pp. 114-133.

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goal of this thesis. Morelli examines the traditional Western notion that assigns different

types of rationality to men and women and asks whether the cognitional operations are

'gender-specific'.[15] Using Lonergan's cognitional analysis as a guide, Crysdale explores

the social conditions necessary for the emergence of 'gendered' consciousness.[16] Kidder

draws parallels between the epistemologies of feminists Lorraine Code, Sandra Harding,

and Lonergan's epistemology. Kidder suggests, "Feminist analysis of patriarchy provides

a concrete account of the workings of bias."[17]

What makes Lonergan's work particularly adaptable and especially promising is

its foundational character. Like the work of such philosophical predecessors such as

Aristotle, Aquinas, Hegel and Marx, Lonergan's method and ideas are systematic and are

applicable to any field of inquiry. Lonergan's work influenced feminists to focus on his

cognitional theory. A central claim of these writers has been that Lonergan's insistence

on the general nature of the account of human intelligence, irrespective of gender or

culture, is compatible with feminist goals.[18] If true, this establishes common ground

between men and woman at the most foundational level.

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[15] See Elizabeth A. Morelli, "Women's Intuition: A Lonerganian Analysis," in *Lonergan and Feminism*, ed. Cynthia Crysdale (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), pp. 72-87.

[16] Cynthia S.W. Crysdale, "Women and the Social Construction of Self-Appropriation," in *Lonergan and Feminism*, ed. Cynthia Crysdale (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), pp. 88-113.

[17] See Paulette Kidder, "Woman of Reason: Lonergan and Feminist Epistemology," in *Lonergan and Feminism*, ed. Cynthia Crysdale (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), pp. 33-48; Evelyn Fox Keller, *Reflections on Gender and Science* (New Haven, CT & London: Yale University Press, 1985); Bernard Lonergan , "Healing and Creating in History" in *Macro-Economic Dynamics: An Essay in Circulation Analysis*. Ed. Frederick G. Lawrence, Patrick H. Byrne, and Charles C. Hefling, Jr. *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* Vol 15. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988.); and Michael Shute, *The Origins of Lonergan's Notion of the Dialectic of History: A Study of Lonergan's Early Writings on History* (London: University Press of America, 1993).

[18] See Crysdale, "Women and the Social Construction of Self-Appropriation," in *Lonergan and Feminism*, ed. Cynthia Crysdale (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), pp. 88-113; Michael Vertin, "Gender, Science, and Cognitional Conversion," in *Lonergan and Feminism*, ed. Cynthia Crysdale (Toronto:

Clearly, Lonergan's cognitional theory has contributed to feminist analysis, and Lonergan's general method has proven helpful in efforts to bridge the gender gap. It may therefore also prove helpful in our search for some common ground between Christian and post-Christian feminists. This attempt involves moving beyond the scope of Lonergan's cognitional theory, however. Though the cognitional theory is the foundation of his philosophy, and the foundation for this thesis, it can only get us so far in terms of understanding the current debate of the role of faith in the critique of patriarchy. It may highlight the normativity of faith and the inherent religious operations within the human subject and this may ground an argument for the use of faith more generally. However, it is the notion that Christianity is systemically and irretrievably biased that stands at the center of the debate between Christian and post-Christian feminists. To actually re-conceptualize and reconstitute what faith and patriarchy are, it is necessary to push beyond the cognitional theory and deliberation to examine the notion of the human good and his unique understanding of 'bias'. Because the notion of 'bias' is central to his philosophy of history, and because his philosophy of history is the entry point for his discussion of religion in his main philosophical work *Insight*, I will use Lonergan's notion of the dialectic of history as the central theme for working through the basic issues of this thesis. Lonergan's dialectic of history will provide a basis for re-examining a feminist experience' and 'praxis' of faith in the context of social theory and the feminist critique of patriarchy. The hope is that we can develop a critique of patriarchy that is legitimate in both the secular and theological realms.

University of Toronto Press, 1994), pp. 49-71; and Kidder, "Women of Reason," in *Lonergan and Feminism*, ed. Cynthia Crysdale (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), pp. 33-48.

My basic strategy is to turn the concept of patriarchy on its head, work from a sociological and philosophical understanding of the dialectic of history, and thereby analyze 'patriarchy' and 'sexism' as *symptoms* of bias, not as the root cause. In this context, 'faith' will emerge as a healing vector compatible with all factions of feminist theory, rather than as a tool to help perpetuate the cycle of oppression.

i.iv Contribution

Applying the full framework of Lonergan's notion of the dialectic of history in a feminist context is new to both feminism and Lonergan studies. Doing so is potentially fruitful for three central reasons. First, Lonergan's work proves a valuable feminist resource not only in terms of contributing to feminist scholarship, but also in terms of a method for appropriating women's experience and creativity. Second, Lonergan conceives his social theory as normatively human. Thus, his theory holds out hope for developing a method for the analysis of women's oppression without ontologically isolating women's experience. Third, as mentioned, Lonergan's philosophy is comprehensive and in principle applicable to all fields of human inquiry. Yet, unlike philosophical foundations such as Kant, Marx, Hegel and liberalism, which have informed Christian, secular and post-Christian feminist theory, religious reality is an *integral* component of Lonergan's philosophical foundations and radically informs his social philosophy. Lonergan does not refute, negate, lessen, or even restructure the fundamentals of the 'feminist critical principle' or critique of patriarchy. Rather, he

reinforces them while adding a *metaphysical* context otherwise ambiguous, missing, or consciously neglected in the undercurrent ideologies of feminist theory.

My aim is not to develop a feminist theology; this is a task properly belonging to feminist theologians. Rather, the intention is to explore the strictly philosophical foundations of religion and history as they pertain to the question of the thesis. A crucial element in this effort is Lonergan's understanding of 'bias,' which challenges the received feminist version of gender bias, not its account of the historical details and damage done, but in the metaphysical meaning of the term.

i.v Structure of Thesis

Accordingly, there are four tasks ahead. The first chapter examines the debate between secular feminists and feminist theologians and explores the methodological difficulties insured in bridging faith and critiques of patriarchy. The second chapter lays out the notions that inform Lonergan's social philosophy, most specifically his cognitional theory, which involves the notions of deliberation and intellectual, moral, and religious conversion. Chapter three examines the first two approximations of the dialectic of history: progress, and decline. Finally, chapter four centers primarily on the role and function of faith according to the last approximation of Lonergan's philosophy. Through a reworking of how gender bias emerged within the Church, an alternative critique of patriarchy emerges from the structure that is the full dialectic of history. Within this framework of analysis, the epilogue applies these categories to the problem as laid out by

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Rosemary Radford Ruether and Daphne Hampson.[19] What this task provides is a better defense of Ruether's position than Ruether has herself. I will show that the application of Lonergan's dialectic of history bolsters Ruether's philosophical position. That is my aim.

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[19] Rosemary Radford Ruether & Daphne Hampson, "Is There a Place for Feminists in the Catholic Church," *New Blackfriars* 68 no.801 (January 1987): 7-24.

Chapter 1: Overview of the Debate

The task of this chapter is to set down a methodological context for exploring the debate between Christian and post-Christian feminists on the compatibility of feminism and Christianity. The debate is of considerable existential import for feminist scholars and for this reason, the Ruether-Hampson dialogue is an apt entrance point for exploring the debate. The chapter therefore begins with an account of the key points of that debate. The second section situates the debate in the broader contemporary context of Christian and post-Christian feminists. The third section briefly describes my intentions and further articulates the methodology for an alternative critique of patriarchy and role for faith in feminist discourse.

1.1 Ruether Versus Hampson

> I am a Western person, living in a post-Christian age, who has taken something with me from Christian thinkers, but who has rejected the Christian myth. Indeed I want to go a lot further than that. The myth is not neutral; it is highly dangerous. It is a brilliant, subtle, elaborate, male cultural projection, calculated to legitimize a patriarchal world and to enable men to find their way within it. We need to see it for what it is. But for myself I am a spiritual person, not an atheist . . . I am quite clear there is an underlying goodness, beauty and order; that it is powerful, such that we can draw on it, while we are inter-related with it. I call that God.'[1]

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[1] Hampson, a plenary talk at the 1997 Sea of Faith Network conference, "An Ethic for the 21st Century" *Exploring and Promoting Religious Faith as Human Creation.* http://www.sofn.org.uk/conferences/hamps97.html

Daphne Hampson, a controversial Harvard and Oxford educated theologian, argues for the fundamental incompatibility of Christianity and feminism. In reply, the well-respected feminist Rosemary Ruether argues that, while Christianity has a sexist history, it is not impossible to be both an authentic feminist and a Christian. A discussion between the two women appeared in *Black friars* in January 1987 under the title, "Is There a Place for Feminists in a Christian Church?"[2] The following section highlights aspects of the debate most relevant to, and within the scope of, the aim of the thesis.

1.1.1 Hampson

Hampson's position on the role of faith and the function of feminism within the Church is far from ambiguous. She writes:

> Obviously, the Christian Church is better off with feminists
> than without feminists. Therefore, if one is a feminist and a
> Christian one should stay in the Christian Church and work
> for change. But, to put it mildly, Christianity cannot allow
> for the equality of women. I am contending that it is
> intrinsic to the nature of the Christian religion that it is
> sexist: that Christianity cannot continue to be itself and
> allow for the equality of women.[3]

For Hampson, Christianity is a historical religion bound to a sexist past. By 'historical religion', Hampson means that Christianity cannot exist without Jesus Christ as its founding reality and central religious symbol. What he said and did is authoritative and is invariantly foundational for Christian dogma and practice. Jesus Christ is the vehicle by which God *enters* history, making Christianity what it is. One cannot be

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[2] Rosemary Radford Ruether & Daphne Hampson, "Is There a Place for Feminists in the Catholic Church," *New Blackfriars* 68 no.801 (January 1987): 7-24, p. 7 (hereafter *Is There a Place?*).
[3] *Ibid.*

Christian, or a Christian feminist, without referring to that history or the Christian story

surrounding the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ. Hampson states:

> What I am saying is that it is not simply that Christianity
> arose *in* history: all ideas arise in history, and bear the
> imprint of the time when they arose. But that Christianity
> sees certain historical events as revelation. Christianity is
> not simply a message about loving one's neighbor; it is
> bound up with a particular historical person, Jesus Christ,
> about whom Christians say more than just that he was a
> good man.[4]

Hampson regards this historical 'rootedness' of Christianity in Christ as decisive

for feminists. It is not so much that Jesus Christ was sexist. Rather, the culture and

history to which Christianity is irrevocably bound was an ideal medium for the

emergence of sexism and invariably justified the sexist ideologies that feminists work to

ameliorate. She writes, "Women have less stake in a religion which comes from the past.

They have not been accorded the privilege of being counted equal within that religion.

Moreover, the religion has been formulated by men."[5] Hampson finds evidence of this

sexism "in a myriad of ways in the religion."[6] The extended use of male metaphors

makes a tremendous difference in the status of women and men in biblical narratives and

an overwhelming preponderance of men in leadership roles in the gospels.[7] For

Hampson, the anthropomorphism inherent within Christianity weighs heavily on the post-

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[4] *Ibid.*, 8

[5] *Ibid.*,13

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] Paul's epistles for instance indicate there is some evidence of women in leadership roles in the early
Church. See Romans 16:1, 16:3, 16:7 in, *The New Testament*: King James Version (Hendrickson
Publishers, Inc., 2005).

Christian feminist 'attitude' and justifies the view that Christianity poses a threat to the full liberation of women. Thus, "it is not that [Christianity] is inextricably rooted in one particular history but that the history in which it is rooted is a history of patriarchalism."[8] Hampson deems the history of patriarchal social relations as irreversible and permeating, concluding Christianity is unable to accommodate contemporary feminist consciousness. She writes, "The religion cannot be freed of this historical context. The sexism of that context is always going to be present together with the religion. If one reads the Bible one hears of a society which is sexist. The medium is the message. Symbol systems are powerful."[9] Thus, Hampson asserts that the historical origins of the Christian myth matter. "It matters because religion has profound ethical implications. It affects relations between human beings. If Christianity is necessarily sexist, and I have argued that it is, it will continue to distort, as it has in the past, relations between men and women."[10] To that end, just as feminists themselves cannot exist within the Church, so Christian faith has no part to play in feminist critiques of patriarchy.

1.1.2 Ruether

Rosemary Radford Ruether agrees that Christianity was and is pervasively patriarchal. She writes,

> I would be the last to deny this since I have spent the last
> eighteen years demonstrating this fact. I reject the idea that
> somewhere back in the past, at the time of Jesus and the

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[8]Ruether and Hampson, *Is There a Place,* p. 13
[9]*Ibid.,* p. 9
[10]*Ibid.,* p. 13

> early Church, everything was right for women. It is not
> simply a matter of returning to some original, good,
> equalitarian Christianity that gleamed like a flash in the pan
> for a few minutes in the first century and then vanished
> from sight. There are indeed many flashes of alternative
> possibilities that included women, in past periods of
> Christianity. But these will never amount to an alternative
> norm.[11]

Ruether, however, disagrees with the post-Christian conclusion and specifically opposes

Hampson's logic pertaining to the sexism pervading the cornerstone of Christianity. In

questioning Hampson's convictions, Ruether maintains that Hampson's argument is

defective in a 'myriad of ways.' First, eliminating the role of faith, rejecting the Church

or leaving Christianity for other religions such as paganism will not solve the problem

post-Christians are facing. Though Christianity has been and continues to be patriarchal,

"so has been post-Christian Western culture of the Enlightenment. Historical liberalism,

socialism and psychoanalysis have been patriarchal, have either ignored women or sought

to justify their subordination in new ways."[12] Broadening the context, Ruether argues that

most "histories" are patriarchal; Christianity is one among many institutions distorting

relations between men and women. Recognizing the implications of this fact, she asks

rhetorically,

> How, then, do we find any cultural base for feminism? Is
> feminism totally bereft of precedent and cultural memories
> upon which to draw? I don't think this is the case. Although
> males have monopolized the shaping of public culture until
> now and used it to justify their own dominance, they have
> not only been about the justification of their own
> dominance in their various creations of religion,

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[11] *Ibid.*, p. 19
[12] *Ibid.*

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philosophy, literature and science. They have also been
about their own emancipation from the systems of
alienation and domination, either as sensitive, creative
persons from within cultural elite, or as insightful
visionaries and liberators within oppressed communities.[13]

Sexism, thus, is not exclusive to Christianity. Dismissing the role of faith and/or

advocating for the break from traditional Christianity is not going to reconcile faith and

feminism. Ruether advises that feminists can remain at, and work from, its core to effect

greater change within the institution and affect the Christian values that inform social

norms in a feminist and positive way. This leads to her second point: the fundamental

precepts of Christianity are compatible with feminist aims, and feminism and Christianity

need one another. She notes,

These insights and many others belie the patriarchal
construction of Christianity. The restatement of these
insights in our context can be enormously fruitful for
developing a feminist culture of emancipation. But we
should be clear that we are restating these insights in the
context of women's experience, not pretending that this was
its original context. The norm for Christians, and for
feminists, is not an idealized past, but the fullness of
redemptive potential yet to be fully realized. To locate the
norm of truth in a closed past is not only to be unhistorical;
it is to betray the key Christian insight that it lives, not by
the letter of the past, but by the presence of the spirit that
comes from the eschatological future.[14]

Ruether therefore agrees that Christianity is patriarchal, but not at its core. It is her

belief that the basic message of Jesus Christ is not a sexist dialogue that breeds and

perpetuates the dynamics of oppression. Rather, scholarly interpretations of Jesus' words

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[13] *Ibid.*
[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21

reflect a socially constructed patriarchalism. In this context, one can and should be free to choose to be a feminist and retain Christian faith to eradicate gender bias if they will to do so.

1.2 What to do about God? Conceptualizing the Debate

> Feminist theology, combining as it does the concerns of modern theology with socio-political concerns of the broader feminist movement, can be analyzed therefore as a subset of either of these two worlds of thought. This is sometimes cause for confusion and debate. The charge is sometimes raised from the side of Christian thinkers that feminist theologians are more committed to feminism than to Christian theology. Conversely, non-Christian feminists sometimes claim that Christian feminist theologians' allegiance to the Christian tradition, with all its patriarchal underpinnings, renders their work untenable.[15]

In terms of the Hampson-Ruether debate, the question of the compatibility of feminism and Christianity undoubtedly affects the contribution of post-Christians and reformists to the overall body of feminist literature. Yet, to note these difficulties is not to conclude that the task of resolving the dilemma is futile. The effort to liberate women from religious oppression has been substantial in both secular and religious realms; feminist theologians have incorporated many elements of secular feminism and secular feminists have learned from feminist theologians' experience and analysis of religious patriarchy. "Is There a Place for Feminists in a Christian Church?" captures well the ongoing dilemma and addresses the broader issues within feminist theological circles in two ways. First, it highlights different visions of the role of female spirituality and

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[15]Kathryn Greene-McCreight, *Feminist Reconstructions of Christian Doctrine: Narrative Analysis and Appraisal* (London: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 28.

feminism in religion. Second, it defines a precise cause for the break in the thought of

feminist theologians, that is, the role of faith in the feminist critique of patriarchy.[16]

Having examined the basic positions in post-Christian feminism and reform

feminism as illustrated in the Ruether/Hampson debate, we turn in the next section to a

consideration of the broader aims of each school of thought and the basic methodological

and conceptual differences that make an already heated debate even more difficult to

resolve. Here we ask what each feminist theology proposes to 'do about God'.

1.2.1 Post-Christian Feminism

> Religion is potent. It has been the most potent ideology the
> world has known for undermining the integrity of women
> as first-class members of humanity. If we are to create a
> world in which men and women are held to be equal, then,
> I contend, we are either going to have to become atheists
> (which is not I think the way forward) or we must aspire to
> a post-Christian religious position. At the end of the day it
> must be said that if God be good, then God cannot
> commensurate with a religion which is sexist.[17]

Echoing post-Christian feminist thought, Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, a feminist

biblical critic, argues that traditional religion operates with gender-bias and is, thus, a source

of *eternal* untruth, repression, and domination.[18] She asks that the verb God be replaced with

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[16] See Patricia Wilson Kastner, *Faith, Feminism & the Christ* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), pp. 1-37; Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, "Bread Not Stone", in *A Reader of feminist Knowledge*, ed. Sneja Gunew (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 263-276.

[17] Hampson, 1996, p. 14. See also Linda Woodhead, "Spiritualizing the Sacred" in The Practice of Theology: A Reader , eds. Colin E. Gunton, Sephen R. Holmes and Murray Rae (London: SCM Press, 2001), pp. 399-405 and Pamela Dickey Young in Feminist Theology/Christian Theology: In Search of a Method (Fortress Press; Minneapolis, 1990), p.11 and Emilie Townes "Womanist Theology" in The Practice of Theology: A Reader , eds. Colin E. Gunton, Sephen R. Holmes and Murray Rae (Canterbury: SCM Press, 2001), p. 405.

[18] See Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, "Bread Not Stone," pp. 263-276.

the abstract verb 'Be/ing', "or with a universal principle, a 'cosmic matrix', which in the

minds of some is identified with nature/creation/humanity."[19] Thus, according to Fiorenza,

both linguistic and textual interpretations only further reveal that the Church legitimizes

victimization and will always do so.[20]

> The effect of this is not to be underestimated. The Bible is
> not just read as any literature but as scripture. For it to be
> read as revelation to a congregation tends to reinforce
> sexism. It affects human relations today when stories and
> histories are read which convey that male is the norm for
> being human, and in which God is predominately seen
> through male metaphors. Nor does it help to read stories
> about women, however brave those women may be, if they
> are still subordinate.[21]

Similarly, the works of post-Christian feminist Mary Daly, such as *Beyond God

the Father* and *Gyn/ecology,* and Naomi Goldenberg's *Changing of the Gods: Feminism

and the End of Traditional Religion,* ground the revolutionary or post-Christian feminist

position on Christology.[22] Daly's and Goldenberg's works strongly insist that both

Judaism and Christianity are patriarchal at their foundations and women seeking their

own individuality must reject these traditional religions.[23] Goldenberg makes it clear that

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[19] Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, "Bread Not Stone," pp. 263-276. See also Sharon James, "An Introduction to Feminist Theology" on *Theology Network*: http://www.theologynetwork.org/theology-of-everything/getting-stuck-in/an-overview-of-feminist-theology.htm

[20] Ibid. See also Mary Grey, "Feminist Theology: A Critical theology of Liberation" in *The Cambridge Guide to Liberation Theology*, ed. Christopher Rowland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) pp. 89-106.

[21] Ruether and Hampson, *Is There a Place?*, p. 9.

[22] The later works of post-Christian feminist Mary Daly, such as *Beyond God the Father: Towards a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985) and later in *Gyn/ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1990) ground the contemporary post-Christian position on compatibility. Naomi Goldenberg's *Changing of the Gods: Feminism and the End of Traditional Religion* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979) grounds the fundamental position of revolutionary or post-Christian feminists on Christology. See also the new introduction of Mary Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex* (London: Harper & Row, 1975 edition). In 1968, Daly was a radical Catholic theologian who underwent a change a consciousness and by 1975, Daly was a post-Christian feminist philosopher.

[23] Wilson-Kastner, *Faith, Feminism & the Christ.*

the derogatory nature of the Christian church lies in not only the masculine language but lies deeply within its principal images and symbols. She states:

> Jesus Christ cannot symbolize the liberation of women. A culture that maintains a masculine image for its highest divinity cannot allow its women to experience themselves as the equals of men. In order to develop a theology of women's liberation, feminists have to leave Christ and the Bible behind them.[24]

The post-Christian feminist aims to have women's voices heard, sexist language acknowledged, and women's experiences in both private and public spheres valued. Their alternative methodology aims to replace sexist language with gender-neutral language, to embrace forms of religions that arise solely from women's experience, and to divorce itself from traditional Christianity. By disputing the authority of the sacred texts of the Church and introducing a new religion, Goldenberg claims, "We women are going to bring an end to God."[25] In a similar vein, Carol Christ and Judith Plascow in *Womenspirit Rising* lay out possibilities for contemporary alternatives to traditional religions such as neo-pagan spirituality and the return to worship of the Mother goddess,

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[24] See Naomi Goldenberg, *Changing of the Gods* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979) p. 22.
[25] *Ibid.* See also Lynn Hankinson, "The Very Idea of Feminist Epistemology," in *Is Feminist Philosophy Ibid.* See also Lynn Hankinson, "The Very Idea of Feminist Epistemology," in *Is Feminist Philosophy Philosophy?* ed. Emanuela Bianchi (Illinois: Northwestern university Press, 1999), pp.167-189. Many secular feminists also argue that sexism narrows the cognitive sphere for women. See Lorraine Code, *What Can She Know?* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1991). Code criticizes the Bible on linguistic grounds for its use of gendered language of God, and the subsequent negative effects of it on the female psyche.

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often accompanied by a form of feminist witchcraft. Other feminists adopt forms of

humanism centered on notions of 'sisterhood', or focus on individual spiritual quest.[26]

1.2.2 Reformist Feminism

It was 1975 when Mary Daly signaled the beginning of reformist feminist

discourse. She writes, "Rather than a philosophy of despair, we choose a theology of

hope, not because the former is 'false', but because we think it represents an incomplete

and partial version."[27] While Daly abandoned the reform position, present day reformist

feminists recognize both the liability and the potential of a new, authentic Christian

tradition as a foundation for social justice.[28] Reformist feminists have appropriated the

economic, social, political, and gender/identity concerns of 1960's secular feminists in

their approach to understanding the Christian tradition. Scholars such as Phyllis Trible

and Rosemary Radford Ruether have re-examined Christian religious history. Their

analyses confirm a history of patriarchal oppression in Christianity. Yet, they also

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[26] For expanded and interesting older versions of 'sisterhood' see, Carol P. Christ, *Diving Deep and Surfacing: Women writers on the Spiritual Quest* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1980) and Penelope Washborn, *Becoming Woman* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977). For information of traditions based in physical-psychological experience and women's religion as witchcraft, see Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979). Again, as previously noted, for an excellent work on humanist and spiritual quest alternatives see Wilson-Kasner, *Faith, Feminism & the Christ.*

[27] See Daly, *Church and the Second Sex*, p. 223.

[28] Within this particular critique, scholars suggest interpretations of the 'canon' that reflect individual female experience. Both post-Christian biblical feminists such as Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, and reformist theologians adopt a variety of hermeneutic approaches. A hermeneutic of suspicion questions the Biblical writers' interpretation on various events. A hermeneutic of proclamation affirms a canon within a canon, that is, it reaffirms the authenticity of the Church by proclaiming those parts of the Bible that affirms liberation and it rejects the rest of the text. To retrieve and pay tribute to the suffering of biblical women (who were victims of patriarchy) is to use a hermeneutic of remembrance. Finally, the most creative in my opinion and yet most likely the one considered to be fundamentally problematic, is a hermeneutic of actualization. Thus involves rewriting the Bible in order to 'put back' otherwise forgotten women.

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unearthed positive contributions of women to the tradition that involved considerable diversity in women's experiences of religion.[29] Informed by these discoveries, their direction and focus has moved beyond mere criticism towards a recovery of the authentic elements of Christian theology.[30] Rosemary Radford Ruether, Marianne Micks, Letty Russell, and Sally McFague all continue to construct this new feminist theology.[31] Of particular interest is the work of the Canadian theologian Pamela Dickey Young, who in *Feminist Theology/Christian Theology: In Search of a Method,* explicitly addresses the question, how can one be both of faith and be a feminist and remain authentic? She argues that *despite* the history of gender oppression in the churches, Christian faith not only provides strength for sustaining daily life, but also has made a positive contribution to the emergence of human freedom.[32]

1.3 Other Feminist Scholars on the Debate

Many Christian feminists, such as Nicola Slee, Jane Shaw, Julie Hopkins, and Sarah Coakley, to name a few, have all gone head to head and, seemingly, heart-to-heart with not only the question of what to do about God but with Daphne Hampson. In the article, "The

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[29]Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God Talk: Towards a Feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), pp. 4-5. Added to the list of scholars are Joan Morris, and Eleanor McLaughlin. See Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality, Overtures to Biblical theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978).
[30]Similar work has been done in Jewish reform. See Martha C. Nussbaum, "Judaism and the Love of Reason," in *Philosophy, Feminism, and Faith* (Indiana: University of Indiana Press, 2003), pp. 9-39.
[31]See for example Letty Russel, *Human Liberation in a Feminist Perspective- A Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974) and Marianne H. Micks, *Our Search for Identity: Humanity in the Image of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982).
[32]On the religious roots of Western notions of freedom, see the collection of essays, *Liberal Democracy and the Bible,* ed. K.I. Parker (Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter: Mellen, 1992). Patricia Wilson-Kastner in *Faith, Feminism and the Christ* makes a similar argument.

Power to Re-member," Slee notes that, one can be both Christian and feminist only if

"Christian identity is understood in a sufficiently flexible and dynamic way; only if

Christian identity is open to continual renewal, reformation and transformation; and only if

feminism itself is permitted to become an agent of Christianity's own transformation."[33]

Unlike Hampson, Slee considers Christianity and feminism to be fluid, unfixed systems that

are changing and developing in light of each other. They are complex inter-related traditions

whose identities are "most capable of creative transformation at times of deepest crisis."[34]

Slee takes an approach that challenges and subverts patriarchal world-views in the Christian

texts, and then reconstructs the parables as stories of "radical freedom, responsibility and

creativity."[35]

Jane Shaw bases her argument for the compatibility of Christianity and feminism, in

"Women, Rationality and Theology," on the notion of female subjectivity. Questioning

whether a woman can be both Christian and feminist involves consideration of "the social,

cultural, and psychic construction of what it means to be a woman (and a Christian) and, in

turn, how we position ourselves as women in relation to the Christian position."[36] She

challenges a basic assumption in the debate, that all women experience Christianity and

feminism in the same way across cultures, societies, families, and individuals. She demands

the question: Whose feminism and whose Christianity do we consider?

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[33]See Nicole Slee, "The Power to Re-member," in *Swallowing a Fishbone: Feminist Theologians Debate Theology,* ed. Daphne Hampson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), p. 33.
[34]*Ibid.*
[35]*Ibid.,* pp. 41-42.
[36]Jane Shaw, "Women, Rationality and Theology," in *Swallowing a Fishbone: Feminist Theologians Debate Christianity*, ed. Daphne Hampson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), p. 50.

In "Radical Passion: A Feminist Liberation Theology," Hopkins understands

Christianity to be key player in the development of socially prescribed, and symbolically

structured, subordination of women. However, she contends that,

> Feminism is the political movement of women who, by
> applying an analysis of the inequality of power between the
> sexes to their culture, society and personal relationships,
> hope to develop anew female historical subjectivity beyond
> or on the boundaries of patriarchy.[37]

Lastly, Sarah Coakley in "Kenosis and Subversion: On the Repression of

'Vulnerability' in Christian Feminist Writing," discusses a "matter [which] cuts close to the

heart of what separates Christian and post-Christian feminism," namely *kenosis* – 'the

voluntary self-emptying on the part of the second person of the Trinity'. On the one hand,

Daphne Hampson states, "For women, the theme of self-emptying and self-abnegation is far

from helpful as a paradigm."[38] On the other hand, Ruether argues, "Jesus' self-emptying

offers a challenge to patriarchy."[39] In the attempt to reconcile both ends, Coakley thereby

contends that, though kenosis is painful as the new self struggles to emerge, "it is also

transformative and empowering, it is what finally keeps me a Christian as well as a

feminist."[40]

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[37]Julie Hopkins, "Radical Passion," in *Swallowing a Fishbone: Feminist Theologians Debate Christianity*, ed. Daphne Hampson (London: SPCK, 1996), p. 66.

[38]Sarah Coakley, "Kenosis and Subversion: On the Repression of 'Vulnerability' in Christian Feminist Writing," in *Swallowing a Fishbone: Feminist Theologians Debate Christianity*, ed. Daphe Hampson, (London: SPCK, 1996), p. 89. See also Daphne Hampson, *Theology and Feminism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 155.

[39]See Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-talk: Towards a Feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), pp. 137-8.

[40]Coakley, "Kenosis and Subversion," in *Swallowing a Fishbone*, p. 111.

1.4 My Position

My own intention is to focus on the notion of gender bias and turn the notion of patriarchy on its head, so to speak. In Lonergan's social philosophy, patriarchy and gender discrimination emerge as a symptom of group bias, not its cause. I aim to show that faith and feminism are more than compatible; they are both integral to the feminist movement. To do this I must construct a foundation for bridging faith-based values and secular feminist critiques of patriarchy. In order to narrow our scope and refine the focus of the thesis we will not tackle head on Hampson's arguments on the ontological status of Christ. To delve into a philosophical analysis of the ontological existence of Christ is far beyond my present ability and, as Charles C. Hefling notes,

> [E]ven if the philosophical and a priori objection to Jesus' uniqueness were to be answered, an objection on the ethical grounds would remain, namely that because the person to whom Christianity ascribes a unique and saving relationship with God was a male, the symbols that convey Christian meaning have been, and cannot help being, such as to exclude women and deny their equality with men.[41]

In my view, Hampson's position is ultimately ethical and symbolic in nature. She is right to maintain that "symbolic mediations of the meaning and value that were incarnate in Jesus' life and death *must* include, as in fact they have included, his maleness."[42] Yet, Hampson is incorrect to contend that feminism and Christianity are *irremediably* at odds. In a sociological sense, meaning and value – even Christian meanings and values – are socially constructed and, even when biased, may be reconstituted over time. Faith creates the possibility of reform. From this implication, if we are to move forward, two founding

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[41]See Charles Hefling, "On the Possible Relevance of Lonergan's Thought," p.212
[42] *Ibid.*, p. 202.

premises are evident: first, a critique of patriarchy needs to account for the existential reality

of faith and faith based values; and second, the critique of patriarchy must consider

Hampson's insights that Christianity is a historical religion with an inherently sexist past.

Let us move on.

Chapter 2: Laying a Foundation: The Human Subject

Applying the notion of the dialectic of history to problems in feminist social theory is a promising approach for restoring the integrity of Christian values and bridging the gap between faith, traditional religion, and feminism. The dialectic of history, however, is a broad framework premised on a structured foundational philosophy. To understand Lonergan's notion of the dialectic of history and its potential application to the question of the thesis, we need to establish its basis in his understanding of the process of deliberation. This chapter functions as a foundation for the more central task by drawing out the accounts of consciousness, knowing, and deliberation that underpin Lonergan's paradigm. The hope is to clarify how the dialectic works in terms of the individual human subject, preparing us to explore how the unfolding of individual operations transfer into community and the collective processes that constitute the dialectic of history – progress, decline, redemption.

The first section briefly articulates the cognitive foundation of the human subject. The second section explores the metaphysical and dialectical foundations of the human subject and consciousness. The third section focuses on the structure of, and relationship between, the inner dialectic of the subject and the larger dialectic of history.

2.1 Lonergan's Theory of Knowing

Lonergan once remarked that the structure of dialectic is identical with the structure of individual free choice.[1] Lonergan's understanding of human deliberation is itself a development of the critical realist position of Thomas Aquinas, found in its most mature expression in the *"prima secundae partis"* of the *Summa Theologiae*.[2] Aquinas had expressed his understanding of human knowing and the process of deliberation in the metaphysical terms of 13th century scholastic philosophy. In *Insight*, Lonergan used a method he named self-appropriation. As it rests within the human subject, this religious dynamic mirrors the cognitive processes and the creative urgency manifest in the process of self-appropriation, a process considered to be the "correcting agent" for flights from understanding, or the center from which all "intellectual achievement radiates."[3]

As will become explicit, Lonergan's "ultimate concern ... remains the appropriation of rational self-consciousness, of oneself as not only a knower but also as freely and responsibly deciding and acting."[4] Lonergan brilliantly transposed Aquinas's metaphysical account of knowing into a modern context by making explicit its implicit cognitional theory. In this way, he could easily relate Aquinas's basic positions to contemporary debates about consciousness, praxis, history, and human freedom.

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[1] Quoted in Michael Shute, *Origins of Lonergan's Notion of the Dialectic of History: A Study of Lonergan's Early Wiritngs on History* (London: University Press of America, 1993), xxx from unpublished notes. ["Education, Definition of," Education Folder 55 (1949) Lonergan Archives] (hereafter *OLNDH*).
[2] We find Aquinas' account of human knowing in *Summa Theologiae*, Ia-I qq .79-86 and his account of deliberation in STI-II QQ pp. 1-18.
[3] Shute, *OLNDH*, p. 12. See also, Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1972).
[4] *The Lonergan Reader*, Ed. Mark D. Morelli and Elizabeth A. Morelli (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), p. 445.

It is this transposition and its application to the philosophy of history that is our concern. We begin with consciousness, follow with a broad overview of the basic cognitional structure and dive into an examination of the main element driving Lonergan's perspective, self-appropriation.

2.1.1 Consciousness

A working notion of consciousness is a grounding instrument for Lonergan's thought. However, Lonergan sharply distinguishes consciousness from knowledge. To be conscious is simply to be aware, to be present to one "self." Such awareness involves both an intended object and the act of attending to the intended object. To that end, we can be conscious in two ways. First, we may be conscious of what we are attending, the object in question or in sight, constituting the data of sense. Second, we can be conscious of ourselves as attending the object in sight. In each person, the two acts inextricably relate because the act of seeing constitutes data of consciousness. Without the act of seeing, there is no object seen. This act of attending is therefore intentional insofar as the conscious act of seeing intends the object of sight. Being subjects of such acts, we are brought into awareness of what we actually intend. To be conscious of an object, however, is not to necessarily *know* the object. For example, we may be conscious of a person approaching us, but we may not know who it is. To discover who it is requires something more. Similarly, we may be aware of a feeling of disquiet without knowing what the feeling means. We can say that knowledge requires consciousness; without it, we have nothing to know. However, both consciousness and the process of knowledge

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tend towards an object. In the first instance, it is a conscious object of consciousness; in the second instance, it is an object of knowledge.

Lonergan's achievement was making explicit these structures as they illustrate how human beings know. Indeed, understanding how the human subject understands is the foundation for his entire philosophy. As we will discover, Lonergan's actual cognitional theory depends on a method of self-appropriation for its proof; the method of self-appropriation depends on the functioning of the cognitive processes to actualize.[5] This section examines the method of self-appropriation, and then explores the cognitional structure that the method of self-appropriation reveals.[6] I will examine some of the implications of the method of self-appropriation for the thesis topic later in the chapter.

2.1. 2 Self-Appropriation

The cognitional structure emerges out of a process of what Lonergan terms self-appropriation. Self-appropriation is a method for self-knowledge and it moves the subject to know in two ways. First, the subject may be moved to a heightened awareness of the acts occurring when we are knowing or attending to the data, the object seen/observed. Second, while attending to the data or object we are seeing, we may also attend to our own act of attending to the data, thereby moving ourselves to a heightened consciousness, one that includes both acts, and therefore includes the data of sense and the data of consciousness. This is conscious intentionality. Indeed, self-discovery is a daunting and common task. Lonergan made his own task the discovery of the process by which we

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[5] See Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* in Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), p. 22.
[6] For more information, see Frederick E. Crowe, "An Exploration of Lonergan's New Notion of Value," *Science et Espirit* 29 (1977): pp. 123-43.

reveal ourselves to ourselves, come to know how it is we know. Lonergan called this 'first leg' of the journey in self-appropriation, and this process reflects the effort needed to be aware of and disseminate the elements involved in 'knowing'.

Lonergan made it a point to distinguish between certain 'conscious' acts. Knowledge and expression are distinct; expression is a bound act of communication that involves knowledge, and hopefully self-knowledge, and language – both non-verbal and verbal. Language plays an important role in transcending immediate basic needs and expressions of the immediate present. As Lonergan writes, it is in language that "meaning finds its greatest liberation."[7] Once the child leaves the world of mumbling and baby talk, for instance, she moves from that world of immediacy and break into the world mediated by meaning.[8] The acquisition of language is a key moment in the breakthrough, for "words denote not only what is present but also what is absent or past or future, not only what is factual but also the possible, the ideal, the normative."[9] It is in the world of meaning we can reconstruct the past, inform the present, and imagine a different future in which we can explore creative possibilities that might transform current limitations in our decisions and actions, or our horizons, if you will.

Not all expression, of course, is an outcome of understanding. Prior expression is equivalent to animal expression. Yet, at the root of this human creativity and its expression of meaning is a quest for understanding. Lonergan establishes a common structure of the quest, even though personal understanding and expression may differ. As

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[7] Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. 70.
[8] *Ibid,* pp. 28, 76, 89, 112, 238, 263, 303.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 70.

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Aristotle put it at the beginning his *Metaphysics:* "All human beings by nature desire to know."[10] In this view, all humans have an innate capacity to wonder, so evident in the child who persistently asks "why?" Though the field of inquiry broadens with subsequent maturation, we struggle with, and thereby return to, basic questions about who we are and what that means both in our own personal lived experience and present social environment and with respect to the broader questions. In short, human beings seek to orient themselves as subjects in a world of meaning and value encompassing their origins, their destiny, and their place with respect to each. Ultimately, the quest for knowledge is largely a quest for self-knowledge, albeit a quest shared with others.

Self-knowledge can be of two kinds. At the practical level we may reflect on why we do the things we do. We become aware of our preference and attitudes. We learn from our successes and mistakes by reflecting on the consequences of our decisions and adjusting our future actions. For Lonergan there is, however, a more technical notion of self-knowledge that involves the adoption of a methodological heightening of consciousness, which he calls self-appropriation. Self-appropriation is the process of making explicit the common structure of cognition and deliberation that informs any particular knowledge or choice of action. It is not simple knowing. Rather, it is to know how it is we know. It is to understand how we understand. When this type of self-knowledge is fully developed, it can distinguish and relate the various acts and levels of human conscious intentionality involved in human knowing. It can differentiate and relate the various kinds of human knowing. It potentially heightens authenticity in actions

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[10] See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, translated by W.D.Ross, Book 1 http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/ metaphysics. html

and decisions because it renders not only the content that informs the flow of stages in the cognitive process itself but renders all societal norms subject to critique. The root of all ways of knowing is a cognitional structure, including the knowledge that directs decisions and actions.

2.1.3 Conscious Intentionality and Cognitional Structure

In *Insight,* Lonergan establishes that his account of cognitional structure is the foundation for all types of human inquiry.[11] He writes, "Thoroughly understand what it is to understand, and not only will you understand the broad lines of all there is to be understood but also you will possess a fixed base, an invariant pattern, opening all further developments of understanding."[12] While the zones of inquiry differ from each other, they nonetheless share the common structure of all human inquiry. During the course of *Insight,* Lonergan explores the common cognitional structure as it occurs in mathematics, the empirical sciences, common sense practicality, aesthetic appreciation and artistic practice, human development, the human sciences, epistemology, metaphysics, ethics and the philosophy of religion. In all cases, he establishes the relevance of his general position on knowing to the particular kind of knowledge in each zone of inquiry. For example, while the goals of common sense and theory differ – common sense knowledge

concerns practical specific applications, theoretical knowledge concerns universal terms, and relations – nonetheless both involve acts of experiencing, understanding, judging, and deliberation. Lonergan's account of the basic cognitional structure therefore identifies four distinct yet related levels of conscious intentionality: experience, understanding, judgment, and decision.[13] Decisions may be further subdivided into planning and evaluation. Each level represents one component in a unified dynamic structure.[14] The following examines each in turn.

An experiential component is inherent in all levels of knowing, and experience is therefore a necessary feature of all levels of this cognition structure. Yet, the process of human knowing for Lonergan begins with an experience specifically pertaining to retrieving data as potential knowledge, by both sense and consciousness. We attend to the level of experience when we attend to the objects of sense and attend to the sensitive flow of conscious experience. Without the data which experience provides there would be nothing to understand. As simply experienced, the data is prior to any questions we may have about it. Actual human inquiry begins at the second level as it is here that we have a need to understand and make sense of the data. Such a need or question shifts us to the next level of the cognitional structure, that of understanding. Lonergan writes:

> Our experience includes a flow of presentations but the flow is directed by
> our conscious attention, initially by what interests our senses. However,
> human intelligence can ask questions about such presentations. The object

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[13] In *Insight,* Lonergan organized the cognitional structure on three levels: experience, understanding and judgment. Deliberation is treated as an extension of the three level structure. In *Method in Theology,* he reorganizes his account by adding a fourth level of decision. In the later account, the level of decision sublates the prior three levels.

[14] See Shute, *OLNDH,* p. 13. For more information, see Frederick E. Crowe, "An Exploration of Lonergan's New Notion of Value," *Science et Espirit* 29 (1977): pp. 123-43.

of our sensing provides us with material for questions because our sensing alone does not tell us what something is.[15]

Whereas experience provides the sense data, understanding distinguishes, names, groups and correlates the data presented. Questions of the type "what is it?" are questions for intelligence. Such questions take us beyond the "flow of sensitive data" in search of direct insights, which would unify the data in some new way. On this level the human subject is like a detective, seeking out the "what" and "how" of things. We sort out what is relevant and irrelevant in the data; we anticipate direct insights into the data; and we express our understanding in already established ideas, concepts, and hypotheses. The searching for, receiving of, and expression of insight, are the key acts on the second level of understanding.

Insights and their expression on the level of understanding are neither correct nor incorrect and so different kinds of question emerge as to the correctness of the ideas or hypotheses formulated at the level of understanding. This evokes the shift into a third and higher level of conscious activity, the rational level. Here we ask, is it so? Whereas questions on the second level intend a formulation of an understanding, questions on the third level intend judgments of fact. "Understanding yields explanations. Judgment, in contrast, yields no explanation; it merely affirms or denies the explanation."[16] The explanations arrived at on the level of understanding are hereby judged within a notion

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[15] Personal class notes, adopted from Shute, *Religious Studies 2610 Course Manual*, 2nd ed. (St. John's: Memorial University Distance Education, 2000x).

[16] See Lonergan, *Insight* and Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, eds. Fred Crowe and Robert Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993). For more on objectivity of knowing and the Kantian view, and intersubjectivity, see Lonergan, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: Philosophical and Theological Papers, 1958-1964*, eds. Fred Crowe and Robert Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), pp. 214-242.

that hypotheses could be true, probably true, probably false, or false; or we could conclude that we do not know. The point is that we make some judgment of fact. It is only in the act of judgment that we can finally claim to know.

Fundamentally, the process of 'knowing' is therefore a compound of acts of experiencing, understanding, and judging. Accordingly, in any instance of knowing seven distinct acts occur on three distinct but related levels of conscious intentionality. On the level of experience there is (1) data; on the level of understanding there is (2) the question for intelligence; (3) the direct insight or insight into phantasm; and (4) the idea or hypothesis that expresses the meaning of the direct insight; on the level of judgment there is: (5), the question for judgment, (6) the reflective insight which compares the content of the idea proposed with the relevant data in light of the question asked and (7) the judgment of fact itself. We may schematize the process as illustrated in figure 2.1.[17]
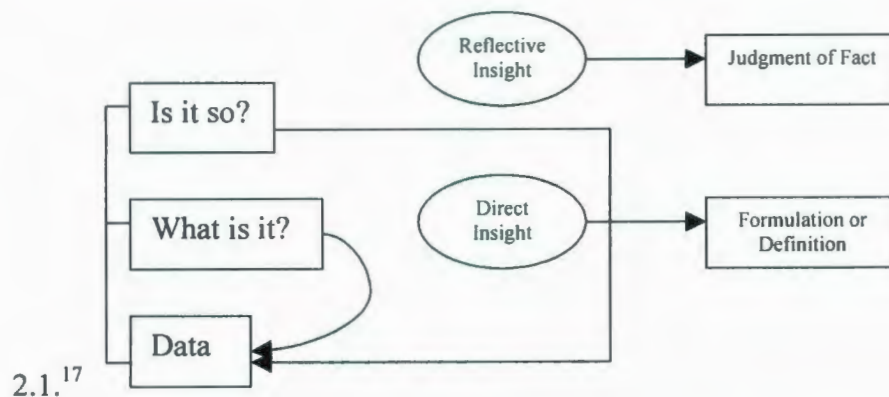
Figure 2.1: First three levels in the process of knowing and conscious intentionality

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[17] Diagram adapted from Michael Shute and William Zanardi, *Improving Moral Decision Making*, 2nd ed (McGraw-Hill, 2003), p. 74.

We can schematize the entire process, illustrated in figure 3, as a model of Practical

Reasoning[22]:
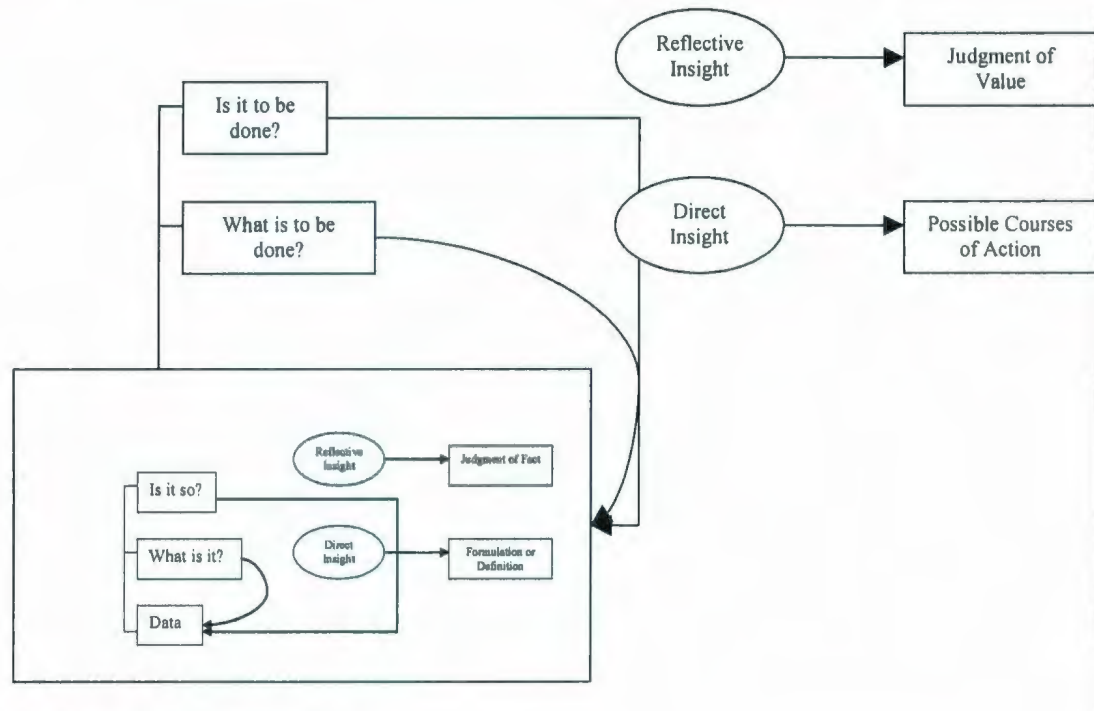
Figure 2.3: The Structure of Deliberation

The full acts of meaning making, for instance, are acts of "active judgments

[which] come with judgments of value, decisions, actions."[23] When one makes judgments

of fact, there can be assurance that facts themselves cannot be wrong or corrupt. Facts are

facts. They are verified in experience. Further, facts explain nothing but rather simply

show or illustate what is the case. For instance, statistics may show that men get paid

more than women in the university even though both are equally qualified with the same

level of education. To be truly effective the statistic must be set in the context of of a

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[22] Diagram adapted from Michael Shute and William Zanardi, *Improving Moral Decision Making*, 2nd ed (McGraw-Hill, 203), p. 74.

[23] Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. 74.

classical type theory which explains the relations between things. Attempting to know the why is important for figuring out whether or not to act on the knowledge, by altering the current policies and practicies and on what grounds. Still futher is the question of the relationship between theoretical results and practical application. In the contemporary context this question marks a crucial turning point. The practical person wants to know what to do. The goal is action. The theoretical person seeks to correctly understand the situation. The goal is universal understanding not action. How can the practical person qua practical select from the plurality of theoretical model available to her? Similarily the theoretician has a related problem: How can the correct hypothesis be effectively implemented in practice?

To develop a fourth level of decision-making is to prioritize praxis, highlighting that consciously intended decisions based in critical ethics direct our labors to understand our world and focus our efforts to effect positive change. We can understand this as Lonergan's response to Marx's Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach that "up to now, the philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it." [24] Lonergan's solution for effecting positive change was to develop a higher viewpoint which sublated both the practical world of common sense and the theoretical world. In his exploration of human interiority, especially as it is manifest in human cognitional process, he reveals how we can differentiate the theoretical from the practical and how we might structure the common ground between the two. Ultimately it was his

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[24] Karl Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach*, (*Thesis XI*), Marx/Engels *Selected Works*, Volume One, pp. 13 – 15 (Paris: Progress Publishers, 1969). Lonergan's response to Marx is the Dialectic of History. See also, Karl Marx, The *Poverty of Philosophy*, (Paris: Progress Publishers, 1955).

discovery of functional specialization that provided the outline for negotiating the collaborative movement from theory to practice.[25] For Lonergan, the implementation of the method of functional specialization would be the characterisitic feature of the arrival of the third stage of meaning. In this stage the method of functional specialization provides the context for directing future global action. It is his mature solution to the problem of specifying the 'differentials' of history. But we are getting ahead of ourselves. Let us return to the examination of value and human deliberation.

In short, value and deliberation moves us to genuine interpretation and genuine responsibility. Genuine responsibility takes us beyond the cognitive process. The cognitive demand at the fourth level of responsibilty is therefore intelligent planning and evaluation. The test at this level is to strive for consistency between the judgements of value that result from planning and evaluating and the actions or inactions that follow. A responsible person must not only determine what is worthwhile, but must act on it. This is the exercise of authentic conscience that, in Lonergan's view, makes human beings genuinely free. In other words, the proper end of authenic deliberation results in responsible action which is what Lonergan meant by the human good.[26] The human good establishes the foundation of self-transcendence, a process involving a three-fold conversion that is intellectual, moral and religious. The following section examines this process.

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[25] See Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. 153; p. 349.
[26] We will examine the notion of the human good in more detail in Chapter 3. See Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, pp. 47-51.

2.3 Self-Appropriation and the Religious Subject: A Notion of Conversion

The method of self-appropriation and the cognitive structure implies a process of multiple conversions. Intellectual conversion involves a shift out of the position that 'knowing is something like looking' to the position that knowing is 'correctly understanding experience.' It makes philosophically explicit the shift that occurs naturally in human development from 'the world of immediacy' to 'the world mediated by meaning. One is inveiling intellectual conversion *when attending to* the cognitional structure – the compound activity of experiencing, understanding, judging and believing this or that to be true or false.

The notion of practical reasoning and deliberation, as grounded in a self-appropriating conscious intentionality, concerns not only a heightening of awareness and attending to the deliberate steps in the cognitive processes but also the heightening of our moral horizon, leading to moral conversion. Moral conversion marks a change or shift in the criterion of one's decisions and choices from satisfaction to values.

> The movement towards moral conversion begins when one becomes aware of the fact that one is responsible for deciding what he or she wishes to be as a person. Moral conversion is that moment when one opts for what is truly worthwhile, valuable, and good as opposed to what is merely satisfying or ego-regarding.[27]

The "moral horizon" is referred to as the moral quest since it is an "expanded world ... it is a world that is not only mediated by meaning but motivated by value."[28] In this light, as Tad Dunne notes, the four levels of consciousness are also "levels of self-

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[27] Braman, Brian Joseph, "The Drama of human existence: Bernard Lonergan's notion of Authenticity," (PhD Thesis, Boston College, 1996, IV), p. iv

[28] Shute, *Religious Studies 2610 Course Manual, 2nd ed.,* (Section 1), p. 40.

transcendence, meaning that they are the principal set of operations by which we transcend the solitary self and deal with the world beyond ourselves through our wonder and care."[29] The demand is for moral development.

Of course, Lonergan's account of cognition and choice is philosophical, not specifically theological; the goal for the human subject is the development of a heightened self-appropriated decision-making. However, the method of self-appropriation also implies a religious dimension of life. If we recall, the method of self-appropriation has the potential to rise "in the most intimate and personal manner the issue of authentic selfhood."[30] It offers general principles for the normative operation of human intentionality that can point towards avenues for the growth and expansion of human consciousness, both personal and collective. Progress, for instance, is not simply a demand for progress in technological skill, science or scholarly understanding. The demand is for a heightened level of openness, self-criticism, responsibility and authenticity – authenticity being obedience to exigencies for raising questions.[31] The following section speaks to what Lonergan means by the religious operations inherent to the human subject.

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[29] Dunne, "Bernard Lonergan (1904-1984)" in *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, http://www.iep.utm.edu/l/lonergan.htm, p.15. See also *Lonergan and Spirituality: Toward a Spiritual Integration* . (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1985).
[30] Dunne, *Lonergan and Spirituality* , p. 81.
[31] For more on authenticity, see Lonergan, *Method in Theology,* pp. 36-52.

2.3.1 Rational Self-Transcendence

The theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, which Lonergan named the supernatural conjugates, are relevant in his view on authentic moral decision-making. [32] The basic religious orientation of the human subject, according to Lonergan, comes out of the search for the good and in the journey toward being fuller and more responsible, a moral quest that indeed directs the human subject to "self-transcendence." Lonergan writes,

> Self-transcendence reaches its term not in righteousness but in life and, when we fall in love, then life begins anew. A new principle takes over and, as long as it lasts, we are lifted up above ourselves and carried along as parts within an ever more intimate yet ever more liberating dynamic whole. [33]

To that end, self-transcendence reveals all levels of conversion, and moral decision-making is self-transcendence manifest in human action. Determining what is worthwhile moves us beyond mere self-interest to authentic value and this promotes progress. Opening up to love and self-trancendence is what Lonergan understands to ground the religious component of our living. In *Method in Theology*, Lonergan writes,

> There is to be experienced one's experience, understanding, judging and deciding. But this fourfold experience is just consciousness. We have it each time we experience, understand, judge and decide. But our attention is apt to be focused on the object, while our conscious operating remains peripheral. [34]

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[32] 'Supernatural conjugates is Lonergan's term for the theological virtues see index in *Insight*.

[33] Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 515. Self-transcendence is the fruit of religious conversion. As we will come to understand, "it sublates the entire Eros of the human spirit into higher supernatural... this higher reality supplies the foundations for the element of redemption in the dialectic of history." Also see Shute, *OLNDH*, p. 18

[34] See Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, pp. 14-15.

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Understanding the notion of authenticity in terms of moral conversion, self-appropriation, and responsible decision-making is important. Yet, given the complex issue of bias as it affects human deliberation and therefore the cumulative social situation, we are burdened with the question of how to counter bias and sustain the authenticity of our efforts to deliberate. For Lonergan, this raises the issue of religious conversion and the notion of rational self-consciousness.

> Rational self-consciousness is a peak above the clouds.
> Intelligent and reasonable, responsible and free, scientific
> and metaphysical, it stands above romantic sponteneity and
> the psychological depths, historial determinism and social
> engineering, the disconcerted existential subject and the
> undeciphered symbols of the artist and the modernist.[35]

2.3.2 Moral Conversion versus Religious Conversion

To clarify quickly the difference between the moral and the religious, any moral realism must observe the exigencies of human inquiry or wonder, that is, be attentive, be intelligent, and be reasonable. When we shift to deliberation, our wonder turns to concern and there emerges the further exigencies needed to plan intelligently, evaluate wisely, and act responsibly. In the religious component of the human journey, a "fuller responsible level of consciousness"[36] emerges as an integral feature in the deliberation process. This juncture reflects Paul Tillich's basic tenet on faith: no person is without ultimate concern; all people consider ultimate things.[37] In Lonergan's words, these

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[35] See the original preface in Lonergan, *Insight*, 3.
[36] *Ibid.*
[37] Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology, Volume I* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951; 1973), p. 23.

questions and ultimate concerns reflect the inherent religious orientation of the

individual. He writes,

> The facts of good and evil, progress and decline raise
> questions about the character of the universe. Such
> questions have been put in very many ways, and the
> answers given have been even more numerous. But behind
> this multiplicity there is a basic unity that comes to light in
> the exercise of the transcendental method. We can inquire
> into the possibility of fruitful inquiry. We can reflect on the
> nature of reflection. We can deliberate whether our
> deliberating is worthwhile. In each case, there arises the
> question of God.[38]

In other words, beyond 'facts' there are 'values' and beyond human values is a

reachable horizon directing questions pertaining to ultimate meaning and ultimate value,

questions that ground our authentic deliberation and action in the world. Being 'open' to

the ultimate source of all reason and value is what Lonergan understands as experiential

ground of the religious component of our living.[39] The deliberation process reflects the

'long, uphill creative process' through which the metaphysical and moral state of our

rational consciousness transcends itself to achieve rational *self-* consciousness.[40] This

heightened level of conscious intentionality exists in the inherent religious component of

all human subjects. Religious conversion thereby reflects the deliberation process as it

transcends self-consciousness in the experience of "otherworldly falling in love". It goes

beyond moral conversion by "transforming the existential subject into a subject 'held,

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[38] See Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. 101.
[39] See Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 343-349; p. 622 , *A Third Collection*, pp. 129-140, and *Method in Theology*, pp. 101-118.
[40] *Ibid.*

grasped, possessed, owned through a total and so an other-worldly love' – the basis for all valuing, choosing and doing good."[41]

2.3.3 Religious Orientation as 'Openness'

Lonergan views the religious orientation and conversion in terms of openness, and conceptualizes openness in three different but connected ways – as fact, as achievement and as gift. Openness as fact is the pure desire to know, the desire to inquire into everything. "It is referred to by Aristotle when he speaks of the wonder that is the beginning of all science and philosophy.... [and] by Aquinas when he speaks of the natural desire to know God by his essence."[42] Openness emerges out of the inner self, and consciously acting or working from the inner self to affirm aspirations rooted in a desire for the good. Openness as fact is the foundation of openness as achievement, that which is "the self in its self-appropriation and self-realization".[43] Openness in general, as Lonergan presents it, implies that the horizon of human subject goes beyond the exigencies of practical living and this openness is intrinsic to the human subject. But to have any type of openness dominate consciousness we must transform what is a principle of possible achievement into actual achievement, through the method of self-appropriation. When the other worldly love is grasped and the love matures, openness as achievement is evident in history, actual progress in science, personal and social relations and scholarship. Openness as achievement is twofold – in the first instance, it is in the

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[41] Braman, Brian Joseph, "The Drama of human existence," pp. iv-v
[42] Morelli and Morelli, *The Lonergan Reader*, p. 377.
[43] *Ibid.*

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acts of understanding, when the orientation of our consciousness corresponds with the unrestricted desire to know. In the second instance, the object becomes "the understood" in the act of understanding.

Finally, openness as gift is "an effect of grace, where grace is taken as *gratis sanans* [healing grace]".[44] Openness as gift is the act of the self entering into a relationship with God. "Because these three are linked in the historical unfolding of the human spirit, they reveal how religious experience holds a fundamental place primarily in man's making of man...."[45] This threefold process is at the core of Lonergan's theology and, as well, our later discussions on faith and the dialectic of history. Human beings have the capacity to inquire about the ultimate meaning and value that would orientate and inform their practical living and spiritual pursuits. Feminism does not fall outside the boundaries of this task.

2.4 Tensions in Living: The Dialectic of the Individual

How do these aspects of the human subject and the different facets of human living come together? Living is still a struggle. Asking questions and achieving openness are processes requiring conscious effort. Lonergan's notion of conversion seems to complicate the requirements of life and the operations in the human subject in a profound way, thereby complicating how we understand and perceive the organization of human living. Self-appropriation is an ongoing process; it is not an easy task. Authenticity is difficult to achieve and maintain. Unapologetically, Lonergan accounts for the

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[44] *Ibid.,* p. 378.
[45] *Ibid.,* p. 379.

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complexity of struggle by adding yet another dimension to conscious intentionality, one highlighting the conscious tension of the individual human subject.

Lonergan recognizes, that is, that while cognitional processes are preeminently mental, the process both begins and ends in the body. Desires, knowledge and that which may direct decisions and actions begin with and emerge out of a partnership with the bodily senses. In an Aristotelian sense, we need to eat, sleep, have sex, and indulge in corporeal activities. Yet, we are also rational. We have intellectual endeavors. We have the capacity for foresight and unconditional love. Human subjects are in the throes of questioning ultimate things or value, what is worthwhile. Questions such as these will move the subject beyond the merely corporeal. The tension Lonergan defines rests on the cusp of mere satisfactions, moral questions, and seeking ultimate value or religious grounding. We are a compound in tension. Lonergan names this dimension the dialectic of the human subject.

"The self is inherently a field of tension with its own unconscious depths, with other selves, and with the transcendent beyond ... the relation of consciousness to the unconscious, to other selves, to the divine, to being."[46] This dynamic renders bare the relationship between a lower ground of tension in human living, in which we negotiate the diverse and divergent demands of body and mind, and the upper ground of tension, in which our ultimate values exist, which spurs us to live up our moral ideals. We are conscious of this "religious" or "spiritual" dynamic that reveals itself in our quest for ultimate meaning and value. We have existential questions about the ground of our own

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[46] Thomas J. McPartland, *Lonergan and the Philosophy of Historical Existence* (Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2001), p. 18

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interests, our knowledge, and actions and that of others. Though we can differentiate 'mind' or 'spirit' and body, ultimately they are part of a unified whole. Human subjects necessarily and consciously exist as compounds in tension.[47]

In a moral sense, we are suspended between the lower and upper ground and the tension is between being authentic and being inauthentic. Authenticity is a demand for creative living. With respect to personal development, it aims for self-transcendence. According to Lonergan, to seek an authentic self (a process that never is complete, one does not just become and then remain authentic) is to observe five precepts in all orientations, deliberations, choices, and actions: be attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible, and kind. Creative living, however, is also interpersonal and social. It is in the collaboration with others as well as with the earth that we create the social and cultural world. Thus, at the lower ground we transform the potentialities of nature in into intersubjective living, social structures, and cultural meanings. At the upper ground, the tension is between the ideal reach of desire to know and the desire to transform the world and our attainment. Thus, creation for a Christian or Jew is a co-creation with the creator of the universe or, for the Buddhist, an enlightened cooperation with *karma*.

This dynamic of tension leads us to two key points. First, while the bodily desires pertain to survival and the fulfillment of basic needs at the level of the originating desire, the desire to know, our innate curiosity, directs us upward toward meaning and value. Understanding unifies an aggregate of experience into a higher unity under the direction

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[47] See, for instance, Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by A.V. Miller with analysis of the text and foreword by J.N. Findlay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977).

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of human deliberation. Meaning organizes us socially and culturally, informing gender roles and social norms. The second key point is grounded in the first: 'meaning' is itself subject to investigation, that is, human living and social organization are ongoing, and are largely based in various systems of meaning which are subject to critique. Thus, in the pursuit of knowledge and meaning making there is a responsibility to be attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible, and kind. Authenticity is a social expression for we are "not just living to survive but living in a drama in which we learn roles, develop a style, and express a character."[48] Human beings have a responsibility to question the content of the character and style that orients their desires and cultures – and that of others. The art of living makes the human subject a part of and a contributor to, the world mediated by meaning. Though what constitutes human, individual, and collective development is not one single commodity or intelligence but rather a process of (1) self-appropriation and (2) what we intend, or our conscious intentionality, we make our world. History is our product. We need to remain aware of how we make our world, and remain critically aware of the content and constructs we allow to move forward with us in history.

2.5 The Shift to Interiority and History

The construction of meaning and of history comes in stages and involves a shift to interiority.

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[48] See Shute, *OLNDH*, p. 23. On the drama of life which molds us, Lonergan writes in *Insight*, "out of the plasticity and exuberance of childhood through the discipline and the play of education there gradually is formed the character of" the human subject." See pp. 188-189.

> The stages in question are ideal constructs, and the key to the constructing in undifferentiating and differentiation of consciousness. In the main we have in mind the Western tradition and we distinguish three stages. In the first stage conscious and intentional operations follow the mode of common sense. In a second stage besides the mode of common sense there is also the mode of theory, where theory is controlled by logic. In a third stage 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.[49]

This shift to interiority is central to what Lonergan calls the shift from the second to the third stage of meaning. It is in the shift between stages of meaning that religion becomes especially problematic. Initially, one could argue that 'religion' was a spontaneous manifestation of the human spirit in its quest of a unified knowledge and the expression of core meanings. This quest for ultimate meaning and value found local symbolic expression in art, music, dance, and ritual. 'Religion' was undifferentiated from other aspects of life. Just as civil societies emerged on the heels of developments in practical living, however, there also emerged a distinct religious aspect of life. Tribes had their gods and priests or shamans who were the practical specialists of that realm. Thus, in the first stage of meaning religious meaning finds cultural expression in symbol, ritual, practical magic, narrative, and myth. The emergence of the second stage of meaning occurs with the universalizing tendencies typified by theory. New sorts of questions emerge about the meeting of various religions and in response there is the universalizing of world religions whose domain goes beyond particular tribe and culture

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[49] Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. 85.

to embrace all human beings. In addition to the practical religion developed in the first stage of meaning, there are philosophies and theologies that differentiate human and divine nature. There is a clear distinction between secular and sacred realms. Eventually, purely secular philosophies emerge which in many cases challenge the validity of religions and their apologists.

In Lonergan's view, we are currently in a period of fragmented and troubled consciousness characterized by the fragmentation of meaning where the relationship between the practical and theoretical, sacred and secular is problematic. [50] Efforts to integrate the religious and secular components of human living are fraught with the kinds of difficulties that emerged in the Hampson-Ruether debate. The very effort to introduce religious meaning into the debate is itself questioned. Sorting out differences will not be an easy process. As I hope to show, however, Lonergan's dialectic of history will be a key element in this aim.

2.6 Summary

We have explored the heightened consciousness in relation to what Lonergan means by the basic religious orientation of the human subject and how the notions arising out of the religious orientation, namely self-transcendence and authenticity, inform moral decision-making. Lonergan's notion of self-appropriation fundamentally grounds his basic positions on knowing, objectivity, and being, and these positions in turn inform his notion of the dialectic of history. We have considered a spontaneous emergence of the

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[50] Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. 84.

religious question in human beings that does not require averting the question of bias and evil in the world.

It is clear that Lonergan's social philosophy is not a simple confluence of material and phenomenon. Rather, his understanding of the dialectic considers authenticity, the religious dynamic, or the transcendental precepts or the potential for divine transcendence, as a guiding force in history. In the following chapter, we will examine how the notions of belief and inherited values are fundamental to Lonergan's method. We will explore in what ways the dialectic of history involves the dynamics of feelings and inner symbolic worlds, the workings of bias, the rejection of true value in favor of mere satisfaction, and the commitment to love rather than hate, and show how the individual dialectic becomes a social dialectic. To these tasks we now turn.

Chapter 3: The Human Good and the Dialectic of History

In the 1930's Lonergan developed his notion of the dialectic of history as a

Catholic response to the dominant secular philosophies of history, specifically liberalism

and Marxism.[1] In his view, the problem with liberalism was rooted in its assumption that

reason was strictly individual and its view that progress was automatic. While liberalism

trumpeted individual liberty, it failed to take into account the reality of the reign of sin

and had no notion of social order other than the *Realpolitik* of the balance of power or

balance of special interests. Marxism countered liberalism's simple-minded

individualism with a totalitarian conception of social order yet gained order at the

expense of human liberty.

Lonergan sought a viewpoint that included both real liberty and real order. This

he found in the Catholic theology of the Mystical Body. His strategy was to counter the

alienation of secular ideologies of history with the fact of the mystical body of Christ. In

Lonergan's view, both liberalism and Marxism failed to realize the positive role of

authentic religious faith in history. Authentic religious faith and its expression in human

hope and effective charity reverses decline.[2] Despite the ultimately theological context of

Lonergan's understanding of human history, he develops a theory of the dialectic of

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[1] For an overview see Frederick Lawrence, "Lonergan As Political Theologian ," in *Religion in Context*, ed. Timothy P. Fallon, S.J., & Philip Boo Riley, (Lanham, Md: University Press of America, 1988), pp. 1-22, Hugo Meynell, "Values in Social Science: Foundations and Applications," in *Religion in Context*, ed. Timothy P. Fallon, S.J., & Philip Boo Riley, (Lanham, Md: University Press of America, 1988), pp. 23-4; Thomas McPartland, "Historicity and Philosophy: The Event of Philosophy: Past Present and Future," in *Religion in Context*, ed. Timothy P. Fallon, S.J., & Philip Boo Riley, (Lanham, Md: University Press of America, 1988), pp. 87-112.

[2] On major and minor authenticity, see Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1972), p. 80.

history that was in his view strictly philosophical.[3] Relying on Aquinas's methodological differentiation of philosophy and theology, Lonergan maintained a strict differentiation of the theological and philosophical components in his understanding of the dialectic of history,[4] the theological component handled in a theology of the Mystical Body and the philosophical component handled by his notion of the dialectic of history. He developed his account of the dialectic of history based on Aquinas' account of human reason and free will, and extended that account to the question of human history. Progress is the ideal line of human reason effectively translated into effective action. Decline is a consequence of the failure of human freedom to follow the dictates of reason. Finally, renaissance is the reversal of decline through the actual influence in history of acts of faith, hope, and charity by those who have freely chosen to counter hate with acts of love and forgiveness.

Lonergan conceives his dialectical philosophy using a scissors analogy. The upper blade is the theoretical framework while the lower blade is the flow or course of history. Understanding history is an act of understanding the relationship between the two blades of the scissors. Lonergan derives the heuristic structure of the upper blade from three fundamental differentials and their dialectical relationships. First, there is the effect of authentic thought and action on the flow of the material. Second, there is the adjustment to the first differential due to unauthentic activity. Third, there is the projection of what is

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[3] See Bernard Lonergan "Analytic Concept of History" in Frederick E. Crowe, ed. *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies 11:1 (1993), pp. 1-36.*
[4] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-Ia QQ1, a1.

required to restore the flow of history to its natural process through supernatural acts of grace.[5]

The upper blade is a three-fold approximation to the actual course or flow of history. "Progress" imagines what history would be like if in every instance human beings always followed the transcendental precepts. In his account of progress, Lonergan includes a theory of the stages of ideal progress in history. These eventually become the stages of meaning in *Method in Theology*.[6] The second approximation, known as 'decline', includes the effects of inauthentic thought and action and its cumulative consequences. The third element is renaissance or, speaking theologically, redemption. "The third approximation results from asking how the historical situation that results from both authentic and unauthentic actions can be returned to conformity to a life according to the exigencies of progress."[7] It is through this third approximation that religion makes its entrance.

Our aims in this chapter are to expand our account of self-appropriation to include more explicitly its social and cultural components, and to flesh out the dynamics inherent in the above description of the upper blade of the dialectic of history in terms of the good. We can then speak of dialectic of community and, ultimately, both blades of the dialectic of history. The first section of this chapter introduces the 'Structure of the Human Good.' This structure provides the heuristic model or ideal type for the analysis of social questions and thereby sets up the normative context for Lonergan's notion of 'bias,' a

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[5] See Shute, *OLNDH*, pp. 40-44. It is Lonergan's contention that the scientific approach to general history has to be of the same type as the specialized history.

[6] Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, pp. 85-86.

[7] Shute, *OLNDH*, p. 42. Also see, Lonergan, *Method in Theology*.

notion central to the argument of the thesis. The second section then situated bias in the context of the first two elements of the dialectic of history, progress and decline. We begin, then, with a sketch of the Structure of the Human Good as mapped out in the diagram below.

3.1 The Structure of the Human Good[8]

Individual Operations	**Community Dimension**	**Meanings of "good"**
1) Desires, Needs	Cooperation	Particular goods
2) Habits, skills	Institution, set up, tasks	Good of Order
3) Orientation/transformations	Personal relations	Terminal Value

The 'Structure of the Human Good' is one component of the upper blade of the dialectic of history. It is an ideal structure, providing fundamental terms and relations for investigating the capacities of human community for progress. The structure *per se* does not include the categories of decline and redemption: its terms and relationships assume the normative operation of human needs and capacities. Nonetheless, it can be readily adapted to do so, as Lonergan himself does in his account of the good in *Topics of Education*.[9] The structure is a foundational context for the study of social systems, it is a 'fundamental sociology' with an invariant structure and thereby relevant for the study of all cultures in any stage of development. Conceived in consort with the notion of the dialectic of history, it envisages the "individual and the social components of the good [as] the range and flexibility of the structure [allows] for exploring all classes of human

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[8] The diagram is a version adapted from the one that appears in Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. 48.
[9] Lonergan, *Topics in Education* in *Collection*, Vol. 10, chapter 2-4, especially pp. 58-78.

action and the conditions of their operation."[10] Lonergan's fundamental aim in developing the structure of the good was to provide a theoretical structure that might "advance human liberty."[11] He wanted to show that, "there is much greater flexibility in the human psyche that makes it open to and adaptable to the emergence of higher forms of organization or self-assembly."[12] Let us examine the first line of the structure.

3.1.1 The First Line of the Human Good

The first line of structure of the human good assumes that human beings can operate collectively and that they typically organize acts of cooperation around collective desires and particular goods. The assumption that the human species has normative capacity for cooperation is crucial to Lonergan's argument. It is an assumption about the nature of the species that challenges assumptions of liberal and Marxist views of social organization. Liberal social contract theories, whether originating from Hobbes, Locke or Rousseau, all start with a methodological individualism. In each case, theories of human cooperation are founded on some primeval agreement among individuals. Lonergan's view is that the human species is, by its nature, cooperative. [13] Marxists, for their part, argue that, while groups coalesce around common class interests, class conflict is nonetheless the fundamental drive in human history. As we shall see, Lonergan does

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[10] See Shute, *OLNDH*, p. 265.
[11] *Ibid.*
[12] Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. 42.
[13] There is increasing body of evidence to support this view from the research of primate zoologists. For two among many recent examples see Frans De Waal *Our Inner Ape* (NY: Riverhead Books, 2005) and Dorothy L. Cheney & Robert M. Seyfarth , *Baboon Metaphysics: The Evolution of a Social Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

not deny the reality of human conflict but he sees it as a distortion of a basic human capacity for intelligent cooperation.

Basic to the flow of the social order is the identification of collective needs and desires. Human beings ask: which particular ends or goods are desired or required to satisfy basic needs of our community at this time? We can use Maslow's hierarchy of needs to illustrate how cooperation unfolds on multiple levels, one flowing to the other in a given order. From the bottom up, we have physiological needs, such as clean air, food, water, and sleep. Above the basic needs is the need for security and safety, for instance, whereby food security, protection from enemies, or shelter takes precedence. Thus, the capacity for performance from the structure's first line illustrates that biological, physiological needs or desires for security direct particular ends. But ends can also reflect the broadest wants, such as the need for belonging and love, cognitive needs or the need to wonder or to know, transcendent needs or the need to believe, and aesthetic desires. The capacity to cooperate is also a capacity to develop higher social orders, self-understanding, meaning and tradition.

The key distinction to grasp here is that between 'recurrent needs" and 'capacities to develop'. Both are incipient in human beings. 'Needs' have their origin in our biology and as so with other primates, we have needs for sustenance, reproduction, security and so on. The occurrence of needs repeats itself: our need for food and water reoccurs daily. Typically, needs are met in a cooperative nexus with others. This is most obvious in infants who are completely dependent on the care of parents, but any reflection on how we satisfy basic needs reveals a supporting social structure.

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Human history reveals how human beings develop new ways to meet needs and to organize their recurrent fulfillment, illustrating that the native intelligence of human beings is eminently creative. This capacity for practical intelligence allows us to organize the meeting of needs in a more efficient manner that our primate cousins. Baboons cooperate in food-gathering, but they do not invent baskets to make the task more efficient. It seems that human beings also have a further set of capacities, beyond the reach of primates. For example, while both baboons and human beings have a capacity for play, only human beings develop sport, and while baboon may pause to enjoy taste and smells, human beings develop cuisine.

3.1.2 The Second Line of the Human Good

Whatever our particular ends, they are organized by the terms of the second line, which organises the habits, skills and development of individuals, and groups of individuals in the community. For instance, we not only eat, we eat together at dinner in a family. It involves preparation of the food and rules of behaviour for eating and talking. It requires an economic system which organises the provision of particular goods in some commonly understood way. By adhering to the commonly understood and accepted roles and tasks, whether in the private sphere like the home or the public domain such as school, industry and commerce, in politics and finance, in church and state the community develops "a vast and intricate web of interconnections that set the lines along which cooperation occurs and uncooperativeness is sanctioned."[14] The agreed upon

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[14] Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. 48.

particular goods and the degree of cooperativeness inform the ends to which the

functioning of the institutions operates. The institution can be the family, society and law,

church, school, and the economy. These institutional frameworks "constitute the

commonly understood and already accepted basis and mode of cooperation. They tend to

change only slowly for change, as distinct from breakdown, involves a new common

understanding and a new common consent."[15] This process of change, or how a

community adapts to change and potentially evolves, is integral to the community itself

and not only informs but is integral to sustaining the good of order.

3.1.2.1 The Good of Order

Cooperation ensures the functioning of the social matrix, and "this concrete

manner, in which cooperation is working out, is what is meant by the good of order."[16]

The good of order is the proper goal of the second line of the structure of the good. Its

integrity depends upon the underlying operation of the terms of the first lines: without

needs, there is no need to order them; without capacities, there is no way to order them.

In a technical sense, the good of order maintains the flow of particular goods via the

operation of insight, skills, and habits of the individuals in the community. This flow

further constitutes the group needs and capacities, and such collective desires and needs

put pressure on the set up of social order and institutions to meet collective demands.

Institutions in turn shape the various capacities, skills, development, and operations of the

individuals and the community. Institutions guarantee the flow of particular goods, and

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[15] *Ibid.*
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 49.

sustain the insights, habits, feelings, and skills required to sustain collective agreement and basic needs of the community. This process is a "development of practical intelligence" which ensures the continued functioning of the infrastructure and the institutions. This intelligence is manifest in the common sense of the community that binds "all its participants into a recognizable, cooperating social order."[17]

If we recall, human knowing involves judgments about the reality of the present situation and the deliberation on the value of possible courses of action. In communities, the individual capacity for intelligence becomes a collective achievement apparent in the varieties of common sense and belief systems that sustain social systems and their institutions. A way of life, with its common fund of beliefs, ensures the spontaneous *cooperation* of citizens. The notion that there are "ideas" which can mobilize and organize masses of people into cooperation is illustrative of the historical production of meaning, the stages of meaning and the concrete functioning of belief. Collective actions occur in the context of common sense and a social order that provides the stability required for a well functioning society. What Lonergan means by the good of order, then, is essentially a 'scheme of recurrence', one that grounds the conditions of "the concrete functioning of human cooperation to bring about a sustained succession of particular goods."[18] This dynamic function produces a routine and a particular good of order on which all societies are dependent. As summarized by Michael McLaughlin:

> A great deal of what happens in ordinary social life, the
> organization of work, the cooperation of industries with
> each other, the basics of investment and capital formation,

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[17] Dunne, *Lonergan and Spirituality,* p.86.
[18] See Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, pp. 27-56.

the laws which regulate buying and selling, the polity
which regulates economics based on social consensus, can
be understood on the level of common sense. The network
of actions and relationships required to get things done in
an orderly and predictable way is what Lonergan refers to
as a 'scheme of recurrence'.[19]

The sustained developments in civilizations therefore function like a wheel, and this

wheel can turn indefinitely. Still, new ideas are required to meet challenges to the

established schemes of the social structure. Such established schemes of recurrence are

the collective habits that must adapt to new situations. Thus, as it pertains to both the

scheme of recurrence and the operative dynamics of the human subject, the wheel I have

in mind can be laid out as follows: situation, insight, counsel, policy, common consent,

action, new situation, new insight, new counsel, new policy, and so on.[20] As we shall see,

adaptation is the fundamental dynamic of human progress that constitutes the first

element of Lonergan's notion of the dialectic of history.

3.1.2.2 Culture and Values

Though we may not aver them explicitly, the structural invariants of particular

goods, the good of order, and values are constantly operative in our lives. Culture or

'meaning' is obviously intrinsically tied to intellectual development – particular goods

and the good of order – as values and value-based systems are the foundation of

community and social development. We may argue that, though the development of a

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[19] See McLaughlin, Michael T., *Knowledge, Consciousness and Religious Conversion in Lonergan and Aurobino* (Roma: Editrice Pontica: Universita Gregorianna, 2003) p. 31.
[20] See Lonergan, *Topics in Education* , pp. 49-51.

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civilization rests in human collaboration and practical living, the enjoyment of that social

order rests in the capacity for intersubjective cooperation –the capacity to organize

systems intelligently, or to make judgments of value with respect to the possible systems

we might envisage. As previously noted, the capacity to cooperate according to higher

demands is also a capacity to develop higher social orders, self-understanding, meaning,

and tradition. Our capacity for meaning and value moves our collective living beyond

the practical into the realm of culture. Culture is a capacity to choose a social order based

on a scale of values.

> There is the expansion of social meanings in the evolution
> of domestic, economic, and political arrangements. There is
> the expansion of cultural meanings as people reflect on
> their work, their interpersonal relationships, and the
> meanings of human life.[21]

The meaning of life and the shift to interiority grounds self-appropriation or

collective-appropriation, if you will. Self-appropriation includes being aware of "the

spontaneity [that] is rooted in the existential moods of wonder (as we inquire), doubt (as

we reflect) and dread (as we deliberate)." The intentionality grounded in the cognitional

structure and the structure of choice provides the potential for moral living grounded in

the transcendental precepts.[22] "Responsible decision-making requires the consideration of

alternatives, possibilities, proper assessment of our concerns and feelings, and

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[21] See Morelli and Morelli, *The Lonergan Reader*, p. 599.

[22] The structure of choice, and choice itself, is the link between human living and the dialectical dynamics operative in human history. See Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 224 and p. 599. See also Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, 3d. Ed., trans. H.J. Paton (New York: Harper and Row, 1964); Giovanni Sala, "The A Priori in Human Knowledge: Kant's Critique of Pure Reason and Lonergan's Insight," Thomist 40 (1976): pp. 179-221.

commitment to responsible courses of action."[23] The religious component of the human

subject is active in the heightened consciousness achieved in self-appropriation, the mode

whereby we not only know but also know about knowing. In the same sense, we could

speak of achieving a heightened conscience in which one not only deliberates, but also

knows how one deliberates. This implies a collective shift to interiority. Lonergan

distinguished this higher level from that of the basic social order because it is through

culture and personal relations that the conditions of human cooperation and social order,

in the first two lines are fulfilled in *a way of life*.[24] The following section examines the

third line in the structure of the human good.

3.1.3 The Third Line of the Human Good

The third level adds another dimension to cultural structures, namely that the

fundamental capacity for cooperation and the social order are conditions of the higher

goal of authentic culture. While authenticity and culture do not add new data, they

supplement the structure with a higher context for understanding the data. In this further

context, civilizations are more than social orders; they are a shared cultural matrix that

extends beyond particular political or economic units to a set of shared values reflected in

the fundamental orientation of individuals and the character of their personal relations.

To illustrate, let us return to Maslow's theory of human motivation. As we illustrated in

the beginning of the chapter, the principles of practical living meet basic needs such as

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[23] Shute, *OLNDH*, p. 17.

[24] Also differentiated as dialectic of fact (intelligence) and dialectic of theory (reflection).

the physiological and need for safety. These needs are organized within a good of order that ensures that needs are met continuously for the majority of people. Social programs supplement the needs of the marginalized populations. To a degree, operations on the first two levels serve also to meet social needs, esteem, and self-actualization. The third line represents what Maslow named toward the end of his life, the need for self-transcendence or self-actualization. For Lonergan, this need is for a self-appropriated authenticity based in terminal values at the level of personal relations. The third line functions as the context for the affirmation or criticism of everything amassed from the development during the first two lines. The third line provides the space that allows the judgment of values that originate a community and direct human cooperation for particular goods.

For Lonergan, reflective development differentiates practical living with an orientation toward the making of meaning. The third line allows for a further expansion of the collective horizon, one that moves the community into the religious orientation of living, or interiority, and encourages transcendence, advanced creativity and critical thinking. Whereas the first two lines ask what we need, here we ask why we need it. To that end, terminal values demand that we discuss as a collective what is worthwhile; these questions in turn form the backbone of that which constitutes culture, social and individual responsibility. They give direction to the personal and particular goods and ends.

In summary, terminal values are the foundation of pragmatic action, policymaking, personal and collective development and the notion of 'solidarity'. Thus,

the particular goals of the third line "give purpose to insight and render us more than mere machines. Only a regular obedience to the transcendental precepts by each member of a community can successfully direct brilliant insights toward worthwhile ends."[25] The structure of the good further demonstrates how human subjects are compounds-in-tension, though this time within multiple levels of community.

3.2 A Notion of Community

The processes and aspirations of the human subject do not occur in isolation; indeed, they happen with other human beings in communities. The past and present are the cumulative result of human decisions and actions, both individual and collaborative, for what humans do and say enters into the flow of history. As we have seen, Lonergan organizes the human good on three levels according to the ends or goals pursued: particular goods, the good of order and terminal value.[26] Accordingly, Lonergan distinguishes "three levels of community [that] follow from the three components of knowing and of the good."[27]

3.2.1 Levels of Community

Corresponding to knowing and the cognitive level of experience, the first level of community is intersubjective. Intersubjective community is manifest in the elemental feeling of belonging together, the nucleus being the family unit and its expansion "the

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[25] Dunne, *Lonergan and Spirituality*, p. 88; See Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, pp. 55-57.
[26] Lonergan, *Insight*, Chapter 18.
[27] Lonergan, "Role of Catholic University in the Modern World" in *Collection*, Vol. 4, ed. F.E. Crowe (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1993), p. 109.

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clan, the tribe, the nation."[28] While intersubjective community precedes civilization, it also "underpins it, so also it remains when civilization suffers disintegration and decay."[29] Its basis is the spontaneous tendency of human beings to cooperate in the pursuit of particular goods. [30]

Corresponding to the cognitional level of understanding, the second level of community is civil community. It is the social institutions, including economic and political structures devised to organize human cooperation for particular goods. Lastly, corresponding to the cognitive level of judgment is cultural community, which Lonergan understands to be, "the field of communication and influence of artists, scientists, and philosophers...."[31] It is in the cultural matrix within which persons consent and advance shared meanings and values. Culture establishes the preferred order of values in a community. These three levels organize the satisfactions of individual needs and the development of personal capacities within the context of social order, and cultural meanings and values. These three levels are in tune with the levels of degrees of differentiation of consciousness.

3.2.2 Dialectic of Community

The communities and social spaces created by human acts inform the environment that we all subsequently process in our inquiries and deliberations, and form our lived experiences. Shared lived situations necessarily create solidarity among persons

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[28] *Ibid.*
[29] *Ibid.*, p. 238.
[30] *Ibid.*
[31] *Ibid.*

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in a community and thus the social environment is fundamentally interpersonal. Just as there is a dialectic of the subject there is a dialectic of community. The dialectic of community is a permanent tension in human living and it is the development-in-tension of the human subject writ large.

We will recall that the dialectic of the human subject is a conscious tension in which the subject negotiates between neural demands and practical intelligence, between material pursuits and sensory perceptions, between the determinations of the human subject and the demands of the community, and finally between the secular and the sacred.[32] "Accordingly, one might say that a single dialectic of community is related to a manifold of individual sets of neural demand functions through a manifold of individual dialectics."[33] The dialectic of the individual is therefore similar to the dialectic of community. Yet, Lonergan writes,

> In two manners, this dialectic of community differs from the dialectic of community of the dramatic subject. First, there is a difference in extent, for the dialectic of community regards the history of human relationships, while the inner dialectic of the subject regards the biography of the individual. Secondly, there is the difference in the level of activity, for the dialectic of community is concerned with the interplay of more or less conscious intelligence and more or less conscious spontaneity in the aggregate of individuals, while the dialectic of the subject is concerned with the entry of neural demands into consciousness.[34]

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[32] Kantian ethics, Hegelian metaphysics, and Marxist social philosophy all inform these specific roots of contemporary dialectical theory and, though the cultural contexts of each aspired to various degrees of 'idealism', fundamental to all were epistemological and dialectical foundations of the human subject.

[33] Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 243.

[34] Lonergan, "The Role of the Catholic University in the Modern World," in *Collection, Vol.4*, p. 109.

Just as the moral quest of the individual leads to self-transcendence, this dialectical

relationship takes a community beyond the horizon of "means of production" to that of

ends and values – why are we doing what we are doing. The operations inherent within

this tension are fundamental to progress and emancipation from all that does not work to

the full of humanity. The dialectic of community is thereby concomitant with modes of

cooperation, belief systems, capacity building, choice and free will.[35]

3.3 A Notion of History

The dialectic of history connects intricately to the structure of the good, and both

are an expansion of Lonergan's cognitional theory. As we have noted, the structure of the

good is an ideal type for understanding the structure of human development. The dialectic

of history is a key tool in understanding human development and decline in history. As a

dynamic structure, the dialectic of history connects the structure of the good to the flow

of history. While individual development is a matter of personal authenticity, the

structure of the good is a matter of the degree of authenticity in personal relations. The

tension experienced by individual human subjects is thereby writ large in the community

and in history. We can thereby speak of the dialectic of history. Lonergan characterizes

the dialectic of history as "the concrete, the dynamic, and the contradictory."[36]

Accordingly, the roots of the dialectic constitute the basic tension of human living, and

therefore the self-appropriation of the human subject, especially the subject's inner

dialectical tensions. The following section forms the foundation for the main argument of

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[35] Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. 48.
[36] Lonergan, *A Third Collection*, p. 7.

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the thesis, and examines the first two approximations of Lonergan's dialectic of history: progress and decline.

3.3.1 Dialectic of History: Progress

As noted, there are three categories in Lonergan's account of the dialectic of history and these categories are of a most general nature. Each category is an approximation of what is actually going on. The first category, progress is a projection of what human history would be if human beings always acted intelligently, reasonably and responsibly. In this sense, progress is counterfactual history; it sets up an ideal course from which any actual course typically deviates. We might ask, for example, what might the state of the Newfoundland Cod fishery be if all the relevant actors in its history had exercised due diligence in the management of the fishery? This exercise in counterfactual history allows us to project what might have been the case and, as an imaginative exercise, identifies a potential set of authentic actions that may well have informed some courses of action in the history of the Cod Fishery. Alternatively, to take an example closer to our thesis topic: what might the history of Christianity or Catholic Church be if gender bias was recognized and addressed from the very beginning? What would such an authentic collaboration look like? How would it affect the history of Christianity and the aim of feminist theologians?

Certainly, the course of history seldom, if ever, takes an ideal path. Still, history nonetheless includes authentic efforts to meet problems with solutions that work. This is the heart of human creativity. By projecting this counter-factual history of progress, we identify the authentically creative responses that have occurred. Furthermore, knowing

the ideal line of progress makes it possible to recognize more clearly, where things went

wrong. We recognize gender bias because we have a real notion of just social relations.

Without a notion of just gender relations, we may not recognize the bias or the

permeating structure of patriarchy within society.

3.3.2 Dialectic of History: Decline

If progress projects an ideal scenario that assumes the full use of human

potentialities, decline is the result of a failure to develop human capacities. To put

another way, progress seeks out the authentic in history and decline identifies what is

inauthentic.

> This wheel of progress becomes a wheel of decline when
> the process is distorted by bias. Increasingly the situation
> becomes, not the cumulative product of coherent and
> complementary insights, but the dump in which are heaped
> the amorphous and incompatible products of the biases of
> self-centered and short-sighted individuals and groups.
> Finally, the core of the objective situation becomes a mere
> dump, the less is there any possibility of human intelligence
> gathering from the situation anything more than a lengthy
> catalogue of the aberrations and the follies of the past. As a
> diagnosis of terminal cancer denies any prospect of health
> restored, so a social dump is the end of fruitful insight and
> of the cumulative development it can generate.[37]

The brilliance of decline rests in its deceptiveness: corrupt ideologies can be mistaken as

progressive ideas; that is, particular visions, commodities, or ends for which the good of

order is functioning may not be good but may appear to be so. The operations of those in

power or those who have authority may or may not be authentic. The values at the

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[37] Lonergan, "Healing and Creating in History," *A Third Collection*, p. 105

summit of the cooperative operations and intentions for particular goods may or may not be consistent with the transcendental precepts. As discerned, power could be naked, ultimately revealing power as mere power. In this context, Lonergan distinguishes four types of bias: dramatic, individual, group, or general bias. We should note that the root of all bias is the failure of individuals to observe the transcendental precepts, or the moral quest.

Dramatic bias occurs when a lack of requisite insights enter into a concrete situation. There is first a compensation for the more demanding adaptations which intelligence would suggest and, secondly, an incorrect assessment of specific situations.[38] Dramatic bias is therefore a disruption in the occurrence of insights that are a normal, recurrent, occurrence in a dramatic subject. Lonergan identifies dramatic bias with the psychological phenomena of scotosis, a blind spot in the subject that prevents insights from occurring. It is an aberration and because the repression is pre-conscious, it distorts the development of the subject on both personal and social levels.[39] Elements of dramatic bias are illustrated in Nietzsche's or Keirkegaard's notion of *ressentiment*, namely the dislocation of one's feelings of anger, inferiority, and failure or compulsive use of a scapegoat. The human subject posits all failures and faults onto an illusionary enemy, as they themselves could not possibly be responsible for their demise or circumstances.[40]

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[38] Dunne, *Lonergan and Spirituality,* p. 95.

[39] Shute, *OLNDH,* 45. Lonergan also calls this "scotosis". See *Insight,* 191-206. See also Robert Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations: Toward a Reorientation of the Human Sciences* (California: Scholars Press, 1981).

[40] See Neitzsche, Frederick, *On The Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo,* translated and edited by Walter Kaufmann (translation of *On the Genealogy* in collaboration with R. J. Hollingdale) (New York: Vintage, 1967); this version also included in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche* (New York: Modern Library); See Kierkegaard, Søren. *A Literary Review* (Penguin Classics, 2001).

The result of this is an explicit protective system that surrounds every operation and every mannerism, as if the individual is obedient to some inner law.[41] "Friends, family, co-workers, the general public, may be aware of the rigidness or compulsiveness of the individual in question and so, in turn, create routines of their own which act as defensive circles against the effect of the bias." [42] As Dunne notes, everybody is convinced that these adaptations are necessary but nobody understands why.

> Because the bias occurs in the dramatic pattern [of existence] it affects the communication of particular needs and desires and consequently it affects the artistry required for the successful performance of tasks. Dramatic bias constitutes a weakening of development of common sense and, accordingly, it affects the flow of acts that would recognize and promote successfully the human cooperation that produces the good of order.[43]

Such aberration on the individual level becomes more severe on the social level. The second type of bias is egoism. Like neurotics, egoists disrupt the flow of cooperation, which is necessary for social living. They consciously intend to exploit the intelligence and intersubjective feelings of others, as well as the situation or the good of order in both personal and public spheres, for their own ends. They exercise the detached practical intelligence necessary for progress, yet their intelligence is incomplete and inauthentic, driven by various fears and desires. The egoist does not consider the consequences of what they do to others in the situation. For them the social order is there to assist them in meeting their needs; they do grasp the responsibilities that they might have for the group

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[41] Dunne, *Lonergan and Spirituality*, p. 95.
[42] *Ibid.*
[43] Shute, *OLNDH*, p. 45. See Lonergan, *Insight,* p. 191-222.

or for the institutions. This not only disrupts the good of order, but it distorts the tension between intersubjective spontaneity and practical intelligence that is an essential part of that order. The greater the distortion, the more difficult it is for the community to counteract the detrimental effect. Moreover, though the law may handle incidental aberrations, when egoism becomes generally prevalent there is bound to be deterioration in the effective operation of the good of order.[44]

Like individual bias, group bias or group egoism is also largely an effect of intersubjective feelings based in self-interest.[45] Just as the egoist may be a 'dried up well' when the community needs insight into the common good, when a group is operating solely in their own interests, it is difficult to marshal the insights needed to meet political, economic and social problems.[46] These groups consciously suppress insights into what may be best for outsiders of the group. Group bias is the welcoming nest for neurotics and egoists and destructive to the good of order in many ways.

Obviously, a common understanding binds a community together, and can encourage responsible adaptation to new situations, that maintains the good of order.[47] However, group bias distorts the effort to adapt so that only those ideas that function to sustain their own ends emerge. Just as the egoist is not interested in acquiring the insight needed to understand the situation of others, so group bias prevents insight into the genuine needs of other groups. While they may be unaware of the detrimental effect, the

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[44] See Shute, *OLNDH*, p. 46.

[45] See Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 222-225.

[46] Dunne, *Lonergan and Spirituality*, p. 97.

[47] As noted, the development of a social order depends upon the cycle of successive new ideas and the successive adaptation within social groups. See Shute, *OLNDH*, p. 46.

group alters the social schema with ideas that are not fruitful for all, or operative and advantageous only for some, namely themselves and those of like mind.[48]

In turn, there is a succession of unconscious oppression and molding of attitudes of the oppressed groups and the sustaining of the elite groups and power.

> Advantaged groups develop ideologies to rationalize their controlling position in the social order and so become blind to the real situation that needs correction. Only some of the ideas necessary for development are put in place. The advantaged group directs the distribution of goods to its own advantage at the expense of the less advantaged. Necessary correctives are deemed impractical; because the development is one-sided disadvantaged groups plot their revenge. The degree or distortion will condition the character of their challenge.[49]

The dominant group, just as any group, may have been creative and perhaps visionary, but bias may lead them to disregard the insights emerging from oppressed groups. To protect their status, remain in power, and maintain the flow of their ideas as operative insights, the concerns of the other groups are consciously blocked and overlooked. Put into practice are manipulated economies, fragile and directed technologies, biased beliefs and morals, military forces whose sole purpose is to protect the dominant group, and the manipulation of other creative groups.[50] This leads into the last type of bias: general bias.

General bias is the failure to avert to questions and concerns that go beyond the practical. The form of intelligence proper for dealing with the practical world is common

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[48] Herein, for instance, is the source of class and gender distinctions based not simply on the division of labour but upon privileged social status. We will examine this further in the next chapter.

[49] Shute, *OLNDH*, pp. 47-49. Lonergan writes in *Insight* "[T]o a great extent the attitude of the dominant group determines the attitude of depressed groups. Revolutionaries oppress reactionaries. Liberals meet progressives. In the former case the situation heads toward violence. In the latter case, there is a general agreement about ends with disagreement about the pace of change and the mode and measure of its execution." See also Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 225.

[50] Dunne, *Lonergan and Spirituality*, pp. 97-100.

sense. It is *necessary* for the healthy functioning of the social order, but common sense by its very nature is shortsighted; it is only concerned with fixing the immediate situation. It curtails the occurrence of those further insights or questions that have no practical bearing on the situation at hand. However, the assumption that common sense is omni-competent is detrimental to long term planning. It is the anti-intellectual stance. Of course, it gets things done, but it does not have much interest in the world of theory. Common sense systematically ignores it. It adheres to the notion that to think long-term is to be impractical for deliberation on long-term goals or fundamental values is irrelevant to fixing the immediate problem.[51]

Lonergan writes, "Just as technical, economic, and political development gives man a dominion over nature, so the advance of knowledge creates and demands a human contribution to the control of human history."[52] However, common sense does not allow one to think on the level of history as it arrests the demands of the moral quest, namely a reach for higher viewpoints, authenticity, and the discernment of true value. Those operating from general bias therefore become blind to their own limitations. Ultimately, common sense is anti-religious. Reducing religious practice to the practical horizon of common sense dwarfs and stunts the religious orientation of the human subject. It cuts off the deeper reaches of the religious quest that seeks to understand the ultimate meaning of life. Common sense does not let one appreciate the need for philosophy, critical theory, or the study of history; it does not understand the mystics desire to withdraw to a life of

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[51] Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 225-38.
[52] Ibid., p. 227.

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prayer. In short, common sense does not have the drive and the norms for understanding profoundly complex problems, hence the need for a third line of the structure.[53]

In summary, bias compromises the balance between common sense and theory, or the religious component in human living, with dire consequences. When the short-term view prevails, bias and decline are inevitable; the transcendence and emergence of higher viewpoints requires not only a long-term view but also thinking on the level of history, for it is these two practices that guide progress. Due to bias, especially group and general bias, groups are marginalized, relevant questions are dismissed because they are considered non-practical, resulting in oversights and a flight from understanding. The higher viewpoint is unattained and specializations of human intelligence are unaddressed. Thus, a cumulative succession of increasingly restricted situations in which human kind relinquished intelligent, rational, and responsible control over the course of history proceeds.

3.3.2.1 Authority and Power

Lonergan ignores neither individual autonomy nor the fact of social conflict, but he emphasizes that the act of cooperation with intellectual and effective development is normative. That is, social conflict does not occur because the act of cooperation itself is flawed. Rather, conflict is a feature of the tension between the routines of a present order and the innovations that would alter it; it is manifest in the competing interests of various groups, and in the incomplete development of individuals and groups. The 'fact' of social

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[53] Dunne, *Lonergan and Spirituality*, p. 98.

conflict highlights important facets or components of community and human history, power and authority. As we will discover, these notions are entrenched in the feminist debate at hand and, therefore we will briefly examine what Lonergan has to say about them.

Power and authority are not equivalent terms for Lonergan. Power comes from the cooperation necessary in the dynamics of community. Lonergan writes:

> As the source of power is cooperation, so the carrier of power is the community. By a community is not meant a number of people with a frontier. Community means people with a common field of experience, with a common or at least complementary way of understanding people and things, with common judgments and common aims. Without a common field of experience people are out of touch. Without a common way of understanding, they will misunderstand one another; grow suspicious, distrustful, hostile, and violent. Without common judgments they will live in different worlds, and without common aims they will work at cross purposes. Such, then, is community, and as it is community that hands on the discoveries and inventions of the past and, as well, cooperates in the present, so the community is the carrier of power.[54]

However, Lonergan holds that authority is legitimate power. Individuals can embody authority, but authority ultimately is derived from the authentic meanings and values that inform a community; it is a structured expression of the power controlled by the common experiences and common values of the community. Those who sanction unwarranted actions are the authorities. Their role is to "act in the name of the whole community" and they are responsible for organizing and directing "the whole hierarchy of cooperating groups in the present ... distribute the fruits of cooperation among the

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[54] See Morelli and Morelli, *The Lonergan Reader*, p. 551; See Lonergan, *A Third Collection*, pp. 5-12.

cooperating members ... [and] ban from social intercourse those who would disrupt society."[55] This is necessary because when any social order spreads or any community grows the need for political structures emerges. The political structures require that the individuals who represent or construct the authentic meanings and values of the community be key stakeholders in the decision-making process.

In keeping with 'factual' history, Lonergan asserts that authority, the authorities, and those subject to authorities and power, may be corrupt and just as there is a dialectic component to individuals and communities, "There is a dialectic of authority"[56] whereby,

> Authenticity makes power legitimate. It confers on power
> the aura and prestige of authority. Unauthenticity leaves
> power naked. It reveals power as mere power. Similarly,
> authenticity legitimates authorities, and unauthenticity
> destroys their authority and reveals them as merely
> powerful.[57]

The dialectic of authority thereby further highlights Lonergan's point that the legitimacy of the authority rests in its authenticity.

> Unauthentic subjects get themselves unauthentic
> authorities. Unauthentic authorities favor some groups over
> others.... Community loses its common aims and begins to
> operate at cross-purposes. It loses its common judgments so
> those different groups inhabit different worlds. Common
> understanding is replaced with mutual miscomprehension.
> The common field of experience is divided....[58]

The dialectic of authority is an intricate component of the dialectic of history. Power can lack authority; legitimate authority can be corrupt. The point to keep in mind is that while Lonergan acknowledged the importance of power, he does not reduce his analysis of

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[55] See Lonergan, *A Third Collection*, p. 6.
[56] Morelli and Morelli, *The Lonergan Reader*, p. 550.
[57] *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.
[58] *Ibid.*, See also Lonergan, *A Third Collection*, p. 7

political and legal structures to the analysis of power. There is legitimate power and illegitimate power. Legitimate power derives its authority from the authentic values of a community; illegitimate power is simply a matter of force.

3.3.2.2 Cycles of Decline

Distortions in the dialectic of community and authority are the results of the flight from understanding and they each decrease authenticity in human living to varying degrees. Yet, the effect of each is not to be underestimated. Progress is the result of a succession of authentic choices based in intelligence and the apprehension of value. There are, in turn, optimal situations and the gathering and culmination of higher viewpoints. Decline, however, stems from the existence of biases in the process which distorts the dialectic of community. A distortion in the dialectic of community will effect unintelligible elements in the social situation and produce what Lonergan calls a social surd. When this happens, and human living is at the mercy of the social surd, society is under the rule of non-legitimate power.

A social surd is residue, it is not something that intelligence anticipates; it is imminent in the social situation but it is not intelligible and, from it, we cannot intelligently abstract.[59] Because of the unintelligible and residual social surd, it becomes more difficult to weed out and reverse inauthentic operations. There occurs cycles of decline in which the social situation deteriorates cumulatively[60] – a shorter cycle, and a

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[59] Shute, *OLNDH*, pp. 49-51 and Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 21.
[60] See Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 226.

longer cycle. Importantly, both are interrelated for their ultimate source is a lack of authenticity.

> As a consequence of the cumulative effect of this fourfold bias there occurs a regressive cycle of decline. It is initiated by a flight from understanding. By virtue of the decreasing effectiveness of authenticity in human living it leads in the extreme to the corruption of the social situation, the complete compromise of authentic scientific investigation, and suppression of all further questions relevant to the long-range point of view.[61]

The shorter cycle of decline is a consequence of group bias. Group bias leads to social injustice and allows the dominant group to exercise power for a time. Yet, it is difficult for a group to maintain their position in the face of an expanding social surd and the increased demands of marginalized classes. Marginalized groups take up those ideas rejected by the dominant groups, conflict ensues and a cycle develops: the dominant group loses influence, ability or will to control. The depressed class will rise and, in turn, exercise their will to power and implement those rejected ideas. [62] Thus, there is the minor principle of group bias, which tends to generate its own corrective.[63]

The longer cycle of decline is the effect of all groups (dominant or marginalized) operating with the general bias of common sense. The lack of regard for the long-range point of view has consequences on all levels of the human good. The community becomes ill prepared to produce a social situation that can meet and compensate new ideas. It begins to deteriorate by neglecting relevant questions. Confusion and conflict,

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[61] Shute, *OLNDH*, p. 49.

[62] *Ibid.*

[63] Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 235. We will speak to the corrective in the following chapter. The distinction between dominant minorities comes from Arnold Tonybee. See *A Study of History*, vol.1, abridgement of volumes I-VI by D.C. Somerville (London: Oxford University Press, 1947 and 1957; reprint, 1988), pp. 375-403.

along with stagnation and hesitancy, emerge. The only discernable intelligibility in the objective facts is the equilibrium of economic pressures and a balance of national powers.[64] A consequence to this is the diminishing of importance or relevance of reflective development, and the detached and disinterested desire to know, whose role it is to consider the long-range point of view.[65]

As we have noted, the cultural milieu grounds moral imperatives. If the reflective development or the cultural superstructure is secondary to the infrastructure or is no longer at the summit of the choices made by authorities, concrete living necessarily becomes unintelligible and inauthentic. Institutions fail to be authentic. Those in the community and the people in power become radically uncritical of ideologies that inform their existing modes of cooperation, particular goods and value system. Moreover, once uncritical, it is increasingly difficult to distinguish decline from progress and progress from decline. Thus, though we are essentially free, our own incapacities and biases limit the range or perception of the range of our effective freedom, thereby reducing the probability of altering the situation.[66]

The relationship between the shorter and longer cycles, or the minor and major principles of decline, mirrors the relationship between group and general bias. That is, clearly the shorter cycle can occur in conjunction with the longer cycle, for general bias does not exclude the possibility of group bias. Nevertheless, general bias constitutes the major principle of decline while group bias constitutes a minor principle of decline.[67]

[64] Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 229.
[65] Shute, *OLNDH*, p. 50.
[66] *Ibid.*, p. 51; See Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 235.
[67] *Ibid.*, p. 52; See *Insight*, p. 236.

Because group bias is minor, it is possible for it to reverse itself in light of new leadership and the demise of the dominant minority.[68] Reversing a general bias is difficult, as it consists of adopting a higher viewpoint that, because general bias is present, is highly unlikely. The moral impotence that is the outcome incomplete intellectual and existential development is the ultimate cause.

> When development is incomplete we do not take the time
> to discover necessary practical insights and we are
> unwilling to be persuaded to choose courses of action. The
> result is a gap between the essential freedom we might have
> and the effective freedom we actually do possess. We fail
> to sustain the willingness that would adhere to the
> exigencies of authentic knowing and living. The
> consequence of this is that our knowing, individually and
> collectively, is subject to the cumulative effect of bias.[69]

Moral impotence blocks the capacity to attain the requisite higher viewpoints. This is not to suggest that many good intentions or moral precepts are missing. Rather, it is to say that good intentions and moral precepts do not themselves suffice to counteract the lack of the sustained effort of the mind to come up with solutions and the endless patience to effect real human collaboration.

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[68] *Ibid.* Shute also notes that it is "Lonergan's view that Marx made the error of failing to distinguish the minor and major principle of decline. He grasped that the minor principle would correct itself more quickly through class war and concluded from this that a proletariat revolution would accelerate progress. In fact, the class war accelerated the longer cycle and resulted quite quickly in totalitarian rule." See *OLNDH*, p. 52. See also Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectic of History*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001) pp. 387-417 for "a thorough critical analysis of Marx's dialectical materialism based on Lonergan's understanding of the dialectic of history."
[69] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

3.4 Summary

This chapter functioned to expand our account of self-appropriation to include more explicitly its social and cultural components within Lonergan's notion of community and history, and the dialectics therein. We highlighted Lonergan's notion that the capacity for intellectual development, both practical and theoretical, creates the social infrastructure of a civilization and, in many ways, practical intelligence *per se* ensures that we develop accordingly and survive. Yet, the reach of human knowing and doing goes beyond the merely practical to include culture and value: the aesthetic, scientific, mystical, and religious. Reflective development allows development to take place on the level of meaning and a sustained effort effects progress. Without such effort, a community in decline is a messy affair, meaning there is not just one straight line of decline.

We have discerned that Lonergan's dialectic of history is not a closed system, such as Hegel's thesis-antithesis-synthesis paradigm. Incorporated are four realms of meaning, namely the differentiated realms of consciousness of common sense, theory, interiority, and transcendence. The next chapter takes us into an examination of the question at the core of the thesis, and applies this chapter, as well as everything considered in the first two, to our concern regarding the inherent sexism of the Church, and the question of whether it is reversible.

Chapter 4: Recasting Gender Bias

The remote aim of this thesis is to contribute to the task of reconciling feminism

and Christian faith. The full issue is a large and complex one and whether it can be

satisfactorily resolved in fact is a matter for the future. The proximate end of this thesis

is limited in scope, but I hope strategically so. We began with two seemingly

irreconcilable positions. On the one hand, Hampson argues that one cannot be both a

feminist and a Christian. One the other hand, Ruether argues that, while Christianity is

gender biased, this fact is not fatal to Christianity. A full exegesis of this argument would

lead us into a discussion of basic positions on cognition, epistemology, metaphysics and

the nature of religion. While we have touched on these issues in our introduction to

Lonergan's dialectical philosophy, our aim was to flesh out meaning and reality of bias.

If we can establish what bias *is*, then we can consider whether it is a curable disease. If

bias is by its nature irreversible, then simply establishing the fact of systemic gender bias

in the Christian religion settles the issue: Hampson's argument is right: the bias saturating

the Catholic Church is irredeemable and intrinsic to the nature of Christianity. On this

view, Ruether's effort, though valiant, is hopeless. One cannot more change the nature of

Christianity than one can turn a tiger into a vegetarian.

As I made clear from the beginning, I am sympathetic to Ruether's effort to

reconcile Christian faith and feminism. The issue is both existential and doctrinal.

Existentially, many women consider themselves both Christians and feminists. *Prima

facia*, to be a feminist Christian one must have found a way to reconcile the fact of

patriarchy in the Christian churches with the commitment to feminism. *Doctrinally*, Christianity is a religion of redemption. As written in Gal 3: 28, its foundational claim is that redemption is available to all: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Jesus Christ". Is the gap between the ideal of 'one in Christ' and the fact of patriarchy and gender bias in the Christian Church reason enough to establish the claim that Christianity is irreconcilably gender-biased? On the surface, this appears to be an impossibly high standard. What human being is absolutely authentic? What human institution is perfectly attuned to its ideals? Moreover, if it is a central claim of Christianity that we are all 'one in Christ', then at least doctrinally, Christianity is *not by its nature* gender biased. However, perhaps we are being too hard on Hampson. The spirit of her argument has more to do with the *systemic* nature of patriarchy. For patriarchy is not simply an occasional lapse from ideal practice, it is engrained in the tradition and culture. Put this way, the question then shifts. Is a systemic bias irredeemable?

It is here I believe that Lonergan's analysis of bias is most helpful. For Lonergan, the meaning of 'bias' is understood and conceptualized in terms of a tri-polar dialectic of progress, decline and redemption. Lonergan thereby sharply differentiates human nature and bias. For Lonergan, sin is not a product of human nature; it is, rather, a failure to follow human nature. Progress is a projection of humankind's ideal nature in history. It is intelligent, reasonable and responsible. Bias is unintelligent, unreasonable and irresponsible. Can bias be reversed? If we can establish whether there have been any instances where human beings changed their mind or shifted the basis on which they

acted, we may purport that yes, bias is reversible. Indeed, human history is littered with instances of human failure. Yet, there are instances of human success and instances where persons, communities, nations and cultures have adopted new ideas, or reversed immoral practices. In addition, while there may be many more instances of failure than success, we only need to consider one noteworthy instance. For example, it is in fact the case that there was once institutional slavery in Great Britain and the United States and now there is not. To make the argument we only need one instance. This does not tell us how difficult the task is, or even how one might go about doing it. However, the difficulty is not the point. As Newman once said: "Ten thousand difficulties do not make a doubt."[1] It follows that, if we can reverse systematic bias in one instance, we cannot claim that the fact of systematic bias in an institution is per se enough to condemn the entire institution. In short, if Lonergan's account of progress and decline is correct, then Hampson's argument does hold up and Ruether's effort to reconcile feminism and Christianity is not *per se* futile.

How, then, might Lonergan's account of the dialectic of history facilitate Ruether's efforts? The dialectic of history, in conjunction with his account of the human good, provides a general heuristic structure for the analysis of the problem. The structure of the good provides a set of invariant terms and relations for social analysis applicable to any particular situation. The terms of the dialectic of history set that analysis in the dynamic context of history. So far, our discussion has been limited to the first two terms of the dialectic: progress and decline. Based on that account we were able to establish the

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[1] John Henry Newman, *Apologia: Pro Vita Sua,* ed. David DeLaura (New York: W.W. Norton, 1968), p.239

prima facia validity of Ruether's effort. Both Lonergan's account of bias and Ruether's

account of patriarchy are open to the possibility of reversal. In fact, both Ruether and

Lonergan are Christian. Both would claim that the key to the reversal of gender bias and

the patriarchal culture of Christianity rests at the very core of the Christian faith. For

Christianity emerged in history as a universal religion of redemption. The Easter event at

the core of Christian faith is a story about overcoming evil.

Once again, the purpose is not to produce a theology. Yet, the term redemption is

here on conceptualized in theological terms to remain in keeping with Hampson's and

Ruether's 'language', if you will. In this chapter, therefore, we will explore the element

of redemption as understood by Lonergan in his account of the dialectic of history in both

theological and philosophical terms. This provides the final piece of the analytic structure

we set out to provide. Once this task is complete, we can turn to some concluding

remarks.

4.1 The Third Approximation: Redemption

What does Lonergan mean by 'redemption'? Redemption is the third

approximation of the dialectic of history. Lonergan suggests a heuristic structure to the

solution of the culmination of bias, which is a straight-line of decline. Its purpose is to

restore authenticity in human living and decision-making. The approximation, according

to Lonergan, "results from asking how the historical situation that results from both

authentic and unauthentic actions can be returned to conformity to a life according to the exigencies of progress".[2]

Lonergan initially suggested that the corrective be in the form of a philosophy of philosophies, one based in critical human science. However, he concluded that, not only may the philosophy be too difficult for everyone to grasp intelligently but also human subjects develop philosophy and, therefore, permeate the doctrine or method with their own moral impotence, bias, and emotionally latent encounters with counter-positional differences. Maintaining that the solution to the reign of sin must be universally accessible and strong enough to counter the many instances of hatred, or lack of love, lack of hope, lack of self-direction and control,[3] Lonergan's solution involves:

> Some reversal of the priority of living over the knowledge needed to guide life, and over the good will needed to follow knowledge... [have] a new and lighter integration of human activity ... be transcendent and supernatural ... [introducing] new conjugate forms of mans intellect, will and sensitivity ... some type of charity, of hope, of belief.[4]

In this sense, the recovery or corrective agent does not fall outside the invariant structure of human consciousness. It is operative in the inherent religious orientation or dimension of the human subject and human living and, indeed, human living involves a range of capacities. Yet, the most basic, universal, accessible and fundamental capacity is that of

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[2] Shute, *OLNDH*, p. 42. The structure of choice, and choice itself, is the link between human living and the dialectical dynamics operative in human history. I have chosen not to deal extensively with choice yet, as I see it is most important when linked with free -will, in the context of this thesis. As for its relevance now, see Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 224 and p. 599. See also Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, 3d. Ed., trans. H.J. Paton (New York: Harper and Row, 1964); Giovanni Sala, *The A Priori in Human Knowledge: Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* and Lonergan, *Insight*, Thomist 40 (1976): pp. 179-221.

[3] See Gerard Walmsley, *Lonergan on Philosophical Pluralism: the polymorphism of consciousness as the key to philosophy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), p. 151.

[4] Walmsley, *Lonergan on Philosophic Pluralism*, p. 151. See Lonergan, *Insight, pp.* 718, 719, and 740.

love. Love is not only liberating but instills and sustains a sense of wanting to live according to the transcendental precepts: be attentive, intelligent, responsible, and reasonable. A life that is rooted in love is rooted in liberation. The third approximation of the dialectic of history, in other words, is rooted in love.

4.1.1 The Gift of Love

The love that provides a corrective to group bias is not simply the love of one's neighbor. Rather, according to Lonergan, the prescription for the reversal of decline is an innate human capacity to *fall* in love, and to live in a dynamic of God's gift of grace. To fall in love requires a certain degree of faith. Love is a driver of faith and faith is the driver of recovery from bias and decline but it is only the love born out of a relationship with God that "is without limits or qualifications or conditions or reservation."[5] Based in liberation, hope, and charity, this particular type of love orients the subjects to seek values, become self-appropriated, to seek out the long-range point of view, to liberate oneself or group from the constraints of group bias and restore the integrity destroyed by perceived omni-competence of common sense.

> It [religious love] is a state that, once reached, is distinct
> from, prior to, and principle of subsequent judgments of
> value and acts of loving. It is the fulfillment of man's
> capacity for self-transcendence, and as fulfillment, it brings
> deep-set joy and a profound peace. It radiates through the
> whole of one's living and acting, opening one's horizon to
> the full, purifying one's intentional responses to values,
> rectifying one's scale of preference, underpinning one's
> judgments of value, simplifying issues by moving them to a

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[5] Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. 106.

> deeper level, and strengthening one to achieve the good in
> the face of evil.... Such being in love is religious.[6]

Religious love thereby is operative through the supernatural acts of grace. For

instance, the love radiating from intellectual, moral, and affective conversion in their

broader aspects of authenticity, responsibility, love and faith restores reflective

development. Love of all kinds restores cultural community. One may argue that to speak

of love as a way of reversing social conditions and social relations is to assert a utopia.

However, think of love as one would think of patience. Patience is a choice, one that has

real concrete implications for social existence and relationships. We share the world with

people and in so doing we exercise hatred, tolerance or patience. Tolerance is secular.

Hatred may be rooted in both religious dogma and secularism. Patience is orientated in

the inherent religious orientation of the human subject. It is to realize that the other

person has a much right as oneself to be in this world. In the same way, though intensely

so, religious love is an orientation that informs all actions and decisions in a base of self-

transcendence.

> It is not similar to human intersubjectivity, for that is
> between persons with a common horizon; but this being-
> in-love determines the horizon of total self-transcendence
> by grounding the self and its self transcendence in the
> divine lover whose love makes those he loves in love with
> him, and so with one another.[7]

This love extends itself to form the foundation of faith, hope, and charity and each

of these have a role in the reversal of bias. Faith is the *knowledge* born of religious love,

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[6] Lonergan, *Philosophical and Theological Papers* 1965-1980, p. 20.
[7] *Ibid.,* p. 23.

it is implicit, unbiased, it is the "eye of otherworldly love, and the love itself is God's gift; it is on the level of feelings, values, beliefs, actions, personal encounters, community existence, community action and community tradition."[8] As such, this knowledge contributes to and restores moral development as it places the existential subject in a personal relationship with God or 'ultimate concern' that extends beyond the self. Faith lessens the tensions and restores integrity because it demands accountability for that the desires and equality others. Faith orientates religious people as well as secular groups; it is *to improve as human beings*. In this way, believing in God is different from having faith. Lonergan understand belief as:

> ...an outer word, as the explicit knowledge handed on by a
> religious tradition. He sees faith as an inner word, as the
> conscious and yet implicit knowledge derived from
> unrestricted loving. Anyone who sincerely loves has
> received from the Holy Spirit this inner word or implicit
> knowledge.[9]

In both a secular and religious sense, faith is conceptualized as a particular type of knowledge and this knowledge is the vector that moves the human subject to place value and the long-sighted point of view above all else, even immediate progress or comfort. Belief in an institution is a choice but faith as religious development is an inherent operation within every human subject who accepts God's love and ultimate concern. Faith concerns mystery, experiencing, and accepting that mystery. Faith is the vehicle by which we become orientated toward unrestricted love and allow ourselves to imitate this as best we can.

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[8] *Ibid.,* p. 21.
[9] Louis Roy, O.P. *Moral Development and Faith: A Few Lessons from Bernard Lonergan.* The Lonergan Institute (http://www.lonergan.org/dialogue_partners/roy/Moral_Development_and_Faith.htm)

4.2 Faith and Human Development: Healing and Creating in History

The third approximation is rooted in a dynamic of recovery based in the cognitional structure and in rational self-consciousness examined in previous chapters. First, the four capacities, namely the notions faith, love, charity, and hope form a heuristic structure and lead into a second movement within the reach of the human subject. According to the dialectic of history, bias restricts love and allows moral impotence to permeate the individual and collective consciousness. This second movement provides a corrective to the hurdles in the first type of development – development from below upwards –such as moral impotence and restricted love.

Lonergan framed this second type as a movement from "above downwards."[10] This development begins with, at its base, an ultimate concern born out of self-transcendence and religious love. Whereas self-transcendence is the criterion for authenticity and the first type of development, creativity is the criterion for self-transcendence and the base of the second type of development. The method by which to engage in development from above downwards is to take at the base the transcendental precepts. As summarized by Roy:

> So far as the downward movement is concerned, there is a dynamic that operates as follows. On the fifth and highest level of the human spirit, God grants love and faith. On the fourth level, the eye of love discriminates between values and disvalues, and greets the judgments of value that are offered by an authentic tradition. On the third level, the heart invites reason to accept the judgments of fact that the Bible presents as words of God and that are passed on by a trustworthy Church. On the second and first level, it

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[10] Lonergan, *A Third Collection*, p. 181.

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challenges the intellect to appropriate as much as it can the meanings transmitted by Christianity.[11]

The religious orientation of the individual shifts ones horizon and this shift sustains self-appropriation and self-transcendence. The third approximation of Lonergan's dialectic of history involves both types of development, and knowledge born out of other-worldly love, which is knowledge born out of faith. As Rusembuka notes, "the complementary to healing as the intrinsic requirement there is the extrinsic requirement of a concomitant creative process,"[12] and, quoting Lonergan, "For just as the creative process, when unaccompanied by healing, is distorted and corrupted by bias, so too the healing process, when unaccompanied by creating, is a soul without a body."[13] Creativity is at the base of progress and human development in terms of civilization. Without the correcting agents inherent to the development from above to below progress, the human good is always at the mercy of the social surd.

Though this movement transcends rational self-consciousness, it is a religious pattern of existence dependent on the complementarities of both types of development working simultaneously. Just as the already examined development from below to above moved the cognitive operations of the human subject and the engagement of subjects forward in the method of self-appropriation needed to achieve maturity, so too the operations of the human subject will move the individual to reverse bias and restore authenticity, though the movement is of a different kind. It involves meta-consciousness.

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[11] Roy, O.P. "Moral Development and Faith," p. 2; See Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, pp. 115-118.
[12] Muhigirwa F. Brusembuke, *The Two Ways of Human Development According to Bernard Lonergan: Anticipation in Insight* (Gregorian University Press: Roma, 2001), p. 82.
[13] Muhigirwa, *Two Ways of Development*, p. 82. See Lonergan, *Christology Today: Methodological Reflections" in A Third Collection* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), p. 107.

That is, the movement and fluidity between the two types of development engenders a

horizon to which some refer as operating within a mystic pattern of existence, and in this

way offers a corrective to the inauthentic response to conditions of human existence.

Together, these two types of development transpire into meta-consciousness, or a mystic

pattern of existence that is operative and revealed within Lonergan's transcendental

method.

> In other words, in mystical consciousness God is present
> not as an object, but as a goal that is both transcendent and
> yet immanent. He (She) is active in the human agent as the
> source, or co-author, of our acts of experiencing (that is, the
> reception of inner and outer data), knowing, and loving.
> The infinite horizon of all knowing and loving somehow
> becomes really "here" in a new form of awareness in what
> mystics call the ground, apex, or center of the soul.[14]

Mystical consciousness in Lonergan's terms[15] relates to his transcendental method being

a corrective for intelligently reversing or abstracting the social surd.[16] The mystical

pattern of existence reinforces the principles of recovery, the restoration of authenticity in

reflective development, and the correcting agents driving recovery are love, hope, and

charity. Lonergan writes,

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[14] Bernard McGinn, "Mystical Consciousness; A Modest Proposal" in *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality*, vol 8, no 1 (Spring 2008). Gerard Walmsley also suggests that recovery may be based in the mystical pattern of existence.

[15] Lonergan does not focus on mysticism in his dialectical philosophy. See *Method in Theology* and *The Philosophy of God, and Theology*. Also, see James Robertson Price III, *The Reintegration of Theology and Mysticism. A Dialectical Analysis of Bernard Lonergan's Theological Method and the Mystical Experience of Symeon the New Theologian* (Chicago: University of Chicago Ph.D. Dissertation, 1980) and Price, "Lonergan and the Foundation of Contemporary Mystical Theology," *Lonergan Workshop* 5, ed. Fred Lawrence (Chicago: Scholars Press, 1985), pp. 163-95. "Typologies and the Cross-Cultural Analysis of Mysticism," in *Religion and Culture: Essays in Honor of Bernard Lonergan, S.J.*, ed. Timothy P. Fallon, S.J., and Philip Boo Riley (Albany: SUNY Press, 1987), pp. 181-90 and "Transcendence and Images: The Apophatic and the Kataphatic Revisited," *Studies in Formative Spirituality* 11 (1990), pp. 195-201.

[16] See Chapter four of *Method in Theology*, p. 410 and Chapter 17 in *Insight*, and the "Special Transcendent Knowledge" chapter 20 of *Insight*, referring to the solution to the problem of evil.

> Since faith gives more truth than understanding
> comprehends; since hope reinforces the detached,
> disinterested and unrestricted desire to know, [humanity's]
> sensitivity needs symbols that unlock its transforming
> dynamism and bring it into harmony with the vast but
> impalpable pressures of desire, of hope and of self-
> sacrificing charity.[17]

This development conditions the emergence of the creativity needed for the below-upward development of experiencing, understanding and judging. These creative capacities endorse and inform development above to below, wherein the most important element is grace. Grace is universal and permanent. It is in grace that we come into being with God, reaching grace by transcending ourselves through love. In addition, this means[18] that, the "historical institutionalization of the church must be continually relativized to open up fresh ways to encounter God and incarnate the redemptive community."[19]

4.3 Reversal of Patriarchal Culture and Gender Bias

What would Lonergan say about the reversal of patriarchal culture in Christianity? The cognitive and deliberation process behind the constitution of symbols, language, literature and other doctrinal foundations of the Church were subject to a web of beliefs already embedded in consciousness – leading to Hampson's 'sexist society'. The social organization was largely patriarchal and, so, the doctrines reflect this dynamic. A group bias operative within the horizon of those creating Christianity, interpreting the messages, and developing the doctrines therefore compromised the potential for progress.

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[17] Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 745, as cited in Walmsley, *Lonergan on Philosophic Pluralism*, p. 153.
[18] Ruether and Hampson, *Is There a Place*, p. 16.
[19] *Ibid.*

"Patriarchal interests within theology and praxis have rendered women invisible in both Church and theology. The exclusion of women from being Church in a visible way is identified as sexism."[20] The historical accounts validating reformist efforts in terms of emancipating Christianity notwithstanding, the Church and the history of the Church maintain a patriarchal 'stance'. Stance, for Lonergan, is bias. Sustaining this stance over a course of two centuries involves the notions of authority, power, illegitimate knowledge and faulty consciousness. As a result,

> The sexism of that society is reflected in a myriad of ways in the religion. God is described overwhelmingly using male metaphors. Men perform all important roles. The parables tell of women carrying our women's tasks, and men men's tasks. The early leaders of the Church were nearly all male. And so forth. When we do hear of women they are usually disadvantaged persons making the best of their lot in a male society, and sometimes managing to transcend the bounds set for them. The religion cannot be freed of this historical context.[21]

Accordingly, the Christ event and the cognitive process behind creating Christianity unfolded in a web of both authentic knowledge and genuine personal relations that hold legitimate authority and illegitimate authority, revealing legitimate power and illegitimate power. The cycle of decline and the dynamic between the groups in control involve both a powerful minority and a marginalized group with legitimate concerns. This particular dialectic is an instance of the shorter cycle of decline. The Catholic Church has a history of engendering biased beliefs and practices, and this bias led them to disregard insights emerging from marginalized or oppressed groups, such as

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[20] *Ibid.*, p. 27.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

feminist revolutionaries inside and outside of the Church. Based in the tension between the routines of present order and the innovations that would alter it, the authority, and the authorities themselves, and those subject to authority, revert to a history or a historical account of morality that is rooted in sexism. Since the advent of feminism, the Church has made some changes; the changes are represented in the dynamic that Lonergan describes as the shorter cycle of decline, losing control over marginalized populations; feminists having tried to implement rejected ideas – the equality of women and their equal role in the Church. The Church has, albeit slowly, accommodated some concerns. Nevertheless, the 'revisiting' happened not to the extent needed.

> The pervasive individual rationalizations and collective cover stories and ideologies that furnish alibis for the ongoing human refusal of rational self-consciousness result from moral impotence on the level of originating and terminal values.[22]

The 'facet' of pervasive individual rationalizations and collective cover stories evade neither Hampson nor Ruether in the debate about the Churches sexist history. Both feminists also recognize the multiple biases of those who wrote the doctrines. Existentially, the collective effort and reflective development of those involved in the Church illustrates how a collective contributes to the control of meaning. Yet, the collective effort, even if short-sighted or stumped by bias, entangles and weaves a web of beliefs that still functions to ground the moral fabric of society, and to ensure

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[22] Stephen J. Pope (ed.), *The Ethics of Aquinas.* (Georgetown University Press, 2002), p. 450.

commitment and conversion, for better or worse. Obviously, no society or institution is

immune to faulty judgments, restrictions, sin and limited horizons.

> The concrete outcome of moral and moral evil is the
> negation of the human good: the statistical phenomenon of
> sin and crime on the level of particular goods; structural
> evils in technology, economy, polity, the educational
> system, the arts, in organized religions, and the like, on the
> level of the good of order. The pervasive individual
> rationalizations and collective cover stories and ideologies
> that furnish alibis for the ongoing human refusal of rational
> self-consciousness result from moral impotence on the
> level of originating and terminal values. Concretely, then,
> doing good is usually a matter of overcoming inauthenticity
> and evil within ourselves and in our world.[23]

4.3.1   Christianity, Moral Impotence and Development

This possibility for overcoming patriarchy is perhaps why Ruether attempts to

move forward in and with, and not 'beyond', Christianity. Perhaps Christ was not of this

world, but the Church fathers are subject to the same 'moral impotence' and incomplete

development like the rest of the human community. To recall, the development to which

we refer is what we have already examined in detail. It is the movement from below to

above; and it is ordinary; it is common and necessary, albeit creative and conscious, as it

begins with the data and matures into questions based in ultimate concern. It illustrates

human creativity and self-development, a process Lonergan describes as:

> [development] from experiencing to growing
> understanding, from growing understanding to balanced
> judgment, from balanced judgment to fruitful courses of
> action, and from fruitful courses of action to new situations

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[23] Pope, *The Ethics of Aquinas* , p. 450.

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> that call forth further understanding, profounder judgment, richer courses of action.[24]

This type of development instigates multiple conversions – intellectual conversion is becoming self-appropriated, or understanding how it is we understand. Moral conversion is choosing what is truly good over mere satisfaction. This lessens or dissolves individual, group, and general biases. One does not need to experience institutional "religion" to act from a moral standpoint. Yet, in keeping with our discussion about openness and love, to have a distinctly religious conversion is to have emerge a completely distinct and different "self". Walter E. Conn notes that, "the criterion of human authenticity, of the responsible person, is the self-transcendence that is effected through sensitive and creative understanding, critical judgment, responsible decision, loyal commitment, and genuine love."[25] This new self operates from a different "horizon." The horizon is love and the effect is healing.

> Healing must not be confused with the dominating and manipulating to which the reforming materialist is confined by his own principles. It has to be kept apart from religious hatred and heretical sects and from philosophic hatred of social classes.[26]

One may suggest that love is involved in the development from below to above; in fact, it is integral. Indeed, we can love our families. We love our partners, our children, perhaps our nations, perhaps our neighbors. Human love, however, is not without its restrictions.

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[24] Lonergan, "Healing and Creating," in Lonergan, *A Third Collection.* ed. Frederick E. Crowe (New York: Paulist Press, 1985).

[25] Walter E Conn. *Conscience: Development and Self-Transcendence* (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1981), pp. 5-6.

[26] Lonergan, "Healing and Creating," in *A Third Collection*, p. 107.

Jealousy, irrational thoughts, and biases have a detrimental effect on human love, and these place limits on its guarantee for complete development:

> Development is incomplete when it does not go the whole
> way upwards: it accepts some values but its evaluations are
> partial; or it is not concerned with values at all but only
> with satisfactions or its understanding may be adequate but
> its factual judgments faulty; or finally its understanding
> may be more a compromise than a sound contribution.[27]

Moral impotence is therefore the outcome of incomplete intellectual and existential development, the development from below upward. Part of living, of course, is conforming to the most convincing web of beliefs and discarding others that are not emotionally and practically suitable. The Church intended to interpret 'truthfully' and raise important insights, and it was a particular group bias, namely gender bias, which led them to interpret in a discriminatory way. Is reversing bias an easy task? No. The potential that bias will hinder the existential development from below upward to reach intellectual and moral maturity is great. Moral impotence and flights from understanding or believing that 'knowing is like looking' may be an inescapable part of human existence. We may even suggest that multiple encounters with radical moral impotence are inevitable.[28]

> It is impossible to find in oneself the motivation required in
> order to implement fully the five basic precepts: be
> attentive, be intelligent, be rational, be reasonable, be in
> love. Not only are the psyche and the will inadequate to the
> task, but the intellect, having absorbed a lot of false ideas
> during the process of its socialization, easily falls prey to a

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[27] "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness" in Lonergan, *A Third Collection*, pp. 180-181.
[28] See Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 619-633.

wrong estimation (or sometimes even denial) of ethical
issues, of sin, and of moral impotence.[29]

Though all human subjects are creative beings, the type of human development we are

speaking of is fragile, and it is subject to flights of understanding and vulnerable to

buying into biased beliefs. Integrity may easily be lost in a web of decline. However, all

human begins, especially those sanctioning religious doctrine, create history and create

the social norms therein. Any sexism inherent within an institution is simply a reflection

of the biases of the groups and authorities who created that institution. All biases occur

within the horizon of one's experience. The aim for reformist feminism is to understand

that experience correctly.

4.4 Summary

The system of patriarchy is rooted in our horizon, one that extends vertically and

horizontally according to the degrees of our differentiation of consciousness, such as

when we move from symbolic, common sense undifferentiated consciousness to

intellectual consciousness involving theory and abstractions. Yet, self-appropriation as a

method for authenticity is also mode whereby one may shift horizons knowingly, and

with differing degrees of differentiation. It allows one to understand how others know

what they know because the structure of knowing is universal. Therefore, it may

"critically mediate between different modes of knowing, and different horizons of

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[29] Louis Roy, O.P., *Moral Development and Faith: A Few Suggestions from Bernard Lonergan,*
www.lonergan.org/dialogue partners/roy/Moral Development and Faith.htm

meaning".[30] Just as when that fine line separating the below from the sky, our horizon and therefore the meanings to which we attach ourselves change according to, "the scope of our knowledge, the range of our interests."[31] That is, Lonergan agrees that, though all knowledge may be prejudiced, this does not mean that there are no correct, or legitimate, answers. That is, one may correct one's biases, and multiple encounters with insights and recovery is an inevitable part of existence as well. One may come to reveal in the questions themselves both the legitimate and illegitimate presuppositions. In short, patriarchy is reversible.

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[30] Whamsley, *Lonergan on Philosophic Pluralism,* p. 30

[31] Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. 263. See also Whamsley, *Lonergan on Philosophic Pluralism.*

Epilogue

Many feminist analyses of patriarchy, secular and otherwise, provide a concrete instance of the workings of Lonergan's notion of bias in thought, society, and culture.[1] The historico-religious triad of progress, decline and redemption provides us with a framework and philosophy that are compatible with the particular aims of feminism, namely recovery from gender bias. Indeed, uncovering and overcoming the errors that have become part of our web of belief is a difficult task. Yet, it is not impossible. It is within this particular shade of grey that we may take Hampson to task. As Lonergan suggests, moral impotence and the limitations on effective freedom are not the whole story.[2] In short, "because God exists there is a further intelligibility to be grasped."[3] Lonergan's social philosophy provides a corrective to moral impotence and the reality of decline, and this corrective rests in the third approximation of the dialectic of history: redemption.

The central goal of this thesis was to contribute to the task of reconciling feminism and Christian faith, and we find such reconciliation within the depth of what Lonergan means by redemption. Another proximate end of the thesis was to bolster Ruether's position by using our framework as laid out in the thesis. This is the main task of the epilogue. We conclude with a reflection on the implications of Lonergan's philosophy for patriarchy in general.

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[1] See Kidder, "Woman of Reason."

[2] Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 730.

[3] *Ibid.*

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Concluding Remarks: Recasting the Feminist Debate

First, we ask, is Hampson using a hermeneutic of bias? That is, is she operating,

cognitively, from the same flight of understanding of which the Church itself is guilty?

Perhaps the viewpoint of radical feminism is as exclusionary to the opposite sex as the

'historical society' to which Hampson refers as horrifying. Perhaps the edge of

Hampson's sword is her own bias, and her own bias is cousin to the bias that perpetuates

post-Christian philosophy. That is, it is reasonable to put forward that advocating for a

woman-centered religion or spirituality is akin to group bias, and is therefore the same as

the Church operating stubbornly from a male-centered religion. Can we suggest that

Hampson, and indeed the post-Christian enterprise, are operating from a sexism

resembling the sexism that is "supposedly inherent" to traditional male-dominated

religious institutions? These questions demand that Hampson herself be present to

answer. For now, however, we can counter her argument as laid out in the article,

regardless of the possibility of bias, and maintain that she ironically reinforces the main

tenets of Lonergan's social philosophy as well as its heuristic structure. In other words,

using the philosophy laid out in the thesis, we can discredit Hampson's logic and, in turn,

bolster Ruether's position.

First, Hampson believes that there is no inconsistency or tension inherent to the

relationship between feminism and religion; feminism is in some way or in some sense a

religious matrix; feminism is all the way a religious matrix as far as it is a struggle for

liberation. Yet, at the same time, Hampson remarks: "religion is potent. It has been the

most potent ideology the world has known for undermining the integrity of women as

first-class members of humanity."[4] Hampson is seemingly conflating the Church and

Christian faith, faith and religion, or religion and the Church, or perhaps all of the above.

If feminism is in some was a religious matrix, is it potent as well? Lonergan clarifies that

feminism and faith are more than compatible; they are integral to meeting each other

ends, especially in terms of liberation. In light of Lonergan's philosophy, moreover,

Hampson's claim that Christianity is not empowering because there is the expectation

that one deny the 'self' is clearly off the mark. To recall, she writes:

> It [Christianity] seems a very male way of thinking of God
> [which is a biased judgment against men]: God is one who
> is objective to us, over-against us, and separate from us. It
> comports much better with my feminist sense of reality and
> my feminist ethic to conceive of God as being within us,
> moving between us and indeed ... coming into being with
> us.[5]

Lonergan's transcendental philosophy, as it is based in systematic theology, roots

God and the principles of faith-based knowledge as 'inherent to' the human subject and

therefore at the core of empowerment and self-growth. Lonergan's philosophy, that is,

not only accounts for all of Hampson's claims, but also serves to rebuke them. First, God

is not objective to us. Rather, we achieve objectivity through self-appropriation, which

leads to a relationship with God. We develop from below to above or above to below, and

counter injustice by accepting and maintaining both types as operative in us. The inherent

religious aspect of our living lets us enter into a relationship with mystery, with God,

with ultimate concern, a relationship motivated by the ever-expanding will to love, which

defends and protects us against the ever-present will to power. The crux of the dynamic

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[4] Ruether and Hampson, *Is There a Place?* p. 13.

[5] *Ibid.,* p. 12.

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that hinders Hampson's point is that, neither God, nor the imperative of faith, nor the types of development, which unfold and expand over the life-course, are working *over-against* us. Nor are they separate from us. Rather, Lonergan posits grace as supernatural; God is supernatural but also integral to our 'selves' when appropriated and authentic. It is through knowing oneself, and knowing how we understand what it is we understand that we reach God or a transcendental self, able to reform that which works to oppress or marginalize. In contrast to Hampson's idea of Christianity, therefore, where sexism is irrevocable, we erect the method of self-appropriation to allow real movement toward overcoming bias (the mainstay of all feminism). Lonergan places the power within the human subject (the power being rooted in a relationship with God, not over-against), and thereby reveals the 'self' as a genuine vehicle for liberation.

Without consideration of Lonergan's philosophy, radical feminism may (if it has not already) emerge as an ideology that may serve to discount other groups. Indeed, Lonergan's notion of the shorter cycle of decline emphasizes Ruether's point:

> … That liberation includes liberation from patriarchy;
> liberation means the creation of a new society and culture
> where women are fully valued, but not the creation of a
> new oppression of other groups whose value is discounted
> and unnoticed. There were also many women, and
> movements of women, that tried to do this in the past.

Christianity, therefore, (actually, it may be any religion but, importantly, Christianity is one of them) provides the very antidote for that which Hampson claims Christianity does not possess or, in the least, actively denies women, namely freedom. Hampson appears to find it extraordinary that she, since discarding the institution, has "learned to love God

myself.... I think of God as the basis of all that is; that with which, when we are in tune, we can come to be healed and be most fully ourselves."[6] Yet, as we have considered throughout this thesis, Lonergan's posits the self as 'most full' when she is with God or living according to transcendental precepts. His framework illustrates that the human subject is most fully 'developed' when living in grace with God, upon falling in love, and using the principles of faith-based knowledge or meta-consciousness to enhance understanding and forgiveness. These notions are paradoxically in keeping with Hampson's idea of God and spirituality. Hampson reveals that, though she divorced herself from the institution, "...Prayer and a love of God, which were simply too deep in me, held.... A more specifically religious understanding of life fits well with this." In the end, if one projects Lonergan's notion of faith, especially the tenor of mysticism in the third approximation of recovery, we reveal the mode of spirituality that Hampson calls for. Not only does Lonergan's philosophy highlight a spiritual operation in the individual but also it adds a dynamic of faith that "has to do with a stillness, a centeredness in God, and indeed a 'focus' on God."[7] Lonergan provides, that is, a "revolution in how we perceive God," a revolution that Hampson herself demands. Strangely enough, Lonergan achieves this feminist aim in terms of the Christian faith.

To this end, I claim that there is no contradiction between Christianity and feminism. In fact, there is undeniable compatibility. As Ruether points out, "faith statements are basically statements about one's fundamental values and stance toward

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[6] *Ibid., p. 11.*
[7] *Ibid.,* p. 22.

life."[8] Lonergan addresses the feminist agenda and feminist principles within his broader paradigms of cognitional theory and the dialectic of history: "that which is exterior to ourselves cannot be allowed to have authority over us"[9] since self-appropriation allows nothing to have authority over the human subject except legitimate authority, which is in harmony with feminist principles. Feminists, through an exegesis of a theological social philosophy, hereby have a distinct ability to be their own authority. We do not obey God *rather than* our own best will. Rather, it is in the actualization of the integrity within our best free will achieved through faith and self-appropriation that we obey God. Our best will becomes full, or is *ever becoming*, when we enter into this mutual beneficial relationship with God or ultimate concern and mystery. In short, Lonergan provides a notion of faith that allows for a God that is in keeping with Hampson's desire: "For [a] God that with which I am in tune, not one separate from myself who commands."[10]

Whereas Hampson conflates the history of Christianity and the history of the Church, the dialectic of history strengthens Ruether's position. "God is experienced in the midst of human action in conflicts over social justice and injustice. God is experienced as 'breaking into' existing social reality as judgment upon human claims to righteousness."[11] Lonergan's social philosophy, moreover, can further validate Ruether's argument that ideological and dominant systems of power are shattered because of faith. To 'break into' does not suggest that God is exercising power over-against us. Rather,

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[8] *Ibid.*, p. 24

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 12

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 12

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 16

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It means one is transported into a compelling experience of authentic divine justice in a way that reveals the utter hollowness of the claims to divine righteousness made by such systems of domination. One is also grounded anew in God's true mandate for creation that empowers one to struggle against demonic misuse of power. This type of religious experience is very appropriate for one moment of feminism.[12]

Engendering a framework that may reconceptualize the notion of gender bias is difficult. Gender inequality is not simply a self-serving fiction, but a system of oppression with real world implications. As Paulette Kidder notes, "Because of bias, individuals, groups, and whole cultures can build up self-serving fictions in place of potentially harmful realities or in place of realities that demand self-transformation."[13] Self-transformation also demands that feminists revisit their own biases in their working knowledge. Indeed, using Lonergan's philosophy to assert a reflexive analysis, the interpretation of Lonergan and feminism in this thesis does not subsist outside of my own biases. We as feminists must confront our own neurosis in the process of any deconstruction or analysis. In addition, all interpretations are subject to the same critique. Yet, it is with this understanding that we move forward. I move forward by laying the foundation upon which this thesis stood in an interest in discovering, or unpacking, the "macro why" behind the question of "how" this self-serving fiction is undermining the authority of Christianity, authority from which many feminists are trying to break free.

Feminist theologians generally examine the origins of the androcentric bias grounding Christian tradition. Some suggest it was in the creation accounts in the first

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[12] *Ibid.*, p. 16.
[13] Kidder, "Woman of Reason," p. 43.

book of the Hebrew Scriptures: creating women first posits women as secondary human subjects. It creates a class system.[14] Obviously, these suggestions perpetuate a bias based in what was thought to be reasonable, and puts into motion various set of dualisms and identifiers which continue to be passed down from generation to generation: mind and body, rational and emotional, good and bad, divine and human whereby male is associated with the former.[15] Indeed, the aim of feminist theology "is not a gender neutral theology, but one that is aware of the existence of such gender bias and points out the contingency of gender constructions. The inherent gender bias is named patriarchy."[16] We surmised and agreed that Christianity is deeply problematic. At the core of the post-Christian agenda is the effort to illustrate the fact that, intrinsic to the nature of Christianity is a sexism that disallows equality. Hampson writes, "Christianity is a historical religion. It is by nature a historical religion; and it is this which makes it so impossible for women."[17]

It is my sincere hope that this thesis provided an alternative perspective. It is because Christianity is a historical religion that the possibility of a woman being both feminist and a Christian is ripe. Bias is reversible and is especially so using Lonergan's dialectical philosophy as a foundation for recasting Christian principles of faith. In making this journey, we may render Hampson's conclusion and worldview unreasonable. After laying down Lonergan's philosophy and anchoring the framework in a method, one that celebrates the human subject and, indeed, the human spirit, Hampson's logic is no

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[14] Natalie K. Watson, *Feminist Theology* (Cambridge: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2003), p. 26.
[15] See Genevieve Lloyd, *The Man of Reason: 'Male' & 'Female' in Western Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1993).
[16] Watson, *Feminist Theology*, p. 26.
[17] Ruether and Hampson, *Is There a Place?* p. 8.

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longer seamless: "For a feminist to be Christian and also to be true to herself and to her

feminist beliefs is, I am suggesting, not possible."[18] She continues,

> I think we must have some minimal definition of ...the
> equality of women and men with all that that implies. I am
> contending that a religion based on this past, patriarchal
> history and these patriarchal symbols ...cannot actually
> promote equality as long as it is based on this history and
> retain the symbols for God which arise out of this context.[19]

Feminism runs parallel to Lonergan's underlying emphasis on freedom, self-

development, creativity and health in both self-appropriation and the relationship with

God. Meaning-systems change and shift, and that which is at the crux of these changes is

love. Through encouraging transcendence and differentiation of consciousness, symbol

systems can have new meaning. The question of compatibility between feminism and

faith, or feminism and religion, is rooted in the fragmentation and conflicts on the level of

culture and symbol systems. Indeed, Christianity is a dialectically opposing force to the

shift in the control of meaning, one that is the catalyst behind the feminist movement.

Yet, as Crysdale notes, feminism is not about changes in what we know, but the changes

in how we know, how we understand what we understand. "Feminism is a challenge to

the way we have gone about knowing. The epistemological *terra firma* of the recent past

is rocking and as the event develops, it promises to change the face of the earth."[20]

Therefore,

> A successful response to the contemporary crisis of culture
> must involve a recovery of the truth of transcendence –

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[18] Angela Pears, *Feminist Christina Encounters: The Methods and Strategies of Feminist Informed Christina Theologies* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 2004) p. 63.
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] Crysdale, *Lonergan and Feminism*, p. 4.

> both a philosophical recovery … and a renewal of
> spontaneously felt and acknowledged participation in
> transcendent meaning at the level of everyday living. A
> recovery of transcendence is essential to moving beyond
> the alienations and confusions of our epoch because, as
> Lonergan puts it, human beings are by nature oriented into
> transcendent mystery, and therefore human existence that is
> balanced, integrated, and joyful will always require
> convincing symbolic articulations of the human drama that
> incorporates the fact of transcendent meaning.[21]

I end with a contribution to the dialogue confined to the bounded covers of *New Blackfriars*. I ask, is there a place for feminism in the Catholic Church? Within the ebb and flow of progress, decline and redemption, Daphne, I think that you can finally rejoice: you have found your spirituality in the one you had discarded. In addition, Rosemary, you can go out full throttle armed with a solid scheme for your philosophy of reform. Lonergan's social philosophy and, in particular, his notions of knowing and redemption, implies freedom and faith are intrinsic to all individuals. In simply being human, all "feminist women [are] free to speak religiously in a way which is in conformity with their sense of reality and of themselves."[22] Lonergan's cognitional method, and that of deliberation, shows that being human is in some, if not all ways, a religious matrix. His dialectical philosophy illustrates how knowledge born of faith is a cousin to the already inherent moral quest and religious operations of the human subject. History is the product of the dialectical creativity, healing and moral journey of each individual writ large in community. Decline is the product of the lack thereof. Indeed, to overcome social injustice and seek equality, we can draw on our all-access pass to

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[21] Glenn Hughes, *Transcendence and History: The Search for Ultimacy from Ancient Societies to Post-modernity* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003) p. 362.

[22] Radford Ruether and Hampson, *Is There a Place?* p. 13.

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'mystical consciousness' and faith while we are inter-related with it, living a life in self-appropriated awareness, and falling gracefully in love with God or mystery and ultimate concern –all those things confined within the deep recesses of history and the human subject. We can embrace, finally, this being, this belonging and this becoming as feminists.

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