

Ethical Abnegation: Insights from Lonergan

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Abstract

The overarching intent of the present work is to identify features of the problem of ethical abnegation and to offer solutions to the problem for the sake of promoting ethical reflection. This project follows a method of problem and response. This involves identifying and responding to elements within ethical theory that contribute to the problem of ethical abnegation. We will offer accounts of the work of Alasdair MacIntyre (chapter 2), Charles Taylor (chapter 3) and Bernard Lonergan (chapter 4 to chapter 8). Each author, in his own manner, identifies features of ethical theory that can foster and even promote ethical abnegation. Based on the research findings, we propose that Lonergan's method for intentionality analysis advances the works of MacIntyre and Taylor on the topic of ethical abnegation. Lonergan's method treats the operations of responsible consciousness, different stages of meaning and patterns of experience and provides a theoretical framework for identifying features of the problem of ethical abnegation and its possible solutions in both ethical theory and interiority and thereby, provides a framework for self-appropriating tools that aid subjects in pursuing ethical reflection on social goods and values.

In chapters four and five, we refer to the possibility of developing responsible interiority and moral conversion. These chapters also refer to Lonergan's framework for differentiating among stages of meaning and multiple concerns that can facilitate moving back and forth between stages and concerns to promote ethical reflection. Chapter six offers Lonergan's account of the theological tools available to advance the project of contending with ethical abnegation. In particular, theological categories can refer the subject to the need of God's grace and religious conversion to overcome despair and initiate a loving orientation to do good for others. Chapters seven and eight provide explanations for how Lonergan's account of the patterns of experience and in particular, the dramatic pattern of experience can facilitate loving orientation to God as a constituent dimension of ordinary experience. The explicability of Lonergan's tools for identifying and mitigating the challenges of ethical abnegation will be shown to provide justification for the present work's proposal that Lonergan's method advances MacIntyre and Taylor's project of enhancing ethical theory to promote ethical reflection.

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"I wrote you a song
about a funny old world that's coming along,
seems sick and it's hungry, it's tired and it's torn,
it looks like it's dying and it's hardly been born.
But I know that you know,
all the things that I'm saying and many times more.
I'm singing you this song,
but I can't sing enough
cause there's not many men that done the things that you done."

This thesis is my song to you and to all those who do their small part to build up the good and the love for this world full of sorrow and joy, progress and decline, captivity and liberation.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The overarching intent of the present work is to identify features of the problem of ethical abnegation and to offer solutions to the problem for the sake of promoting ethical reflection. Ethical abnegation refers to not taking one's own ethical questions seriously. Essential questions of ethical reflection are "What should I do?" and "Is this right to do?" Though these questions occur spontaneously in the course of one's living, there are challenges that hamper and even prevent one from seriously considering and answering such questions. Throughout this project, we will identify such challenges that allow our courses of action and values to go unquestioned. In abnegating our ethical reflection, we opt for the familiar and the easy courses of action which narrows our potential for growth in both understanding and activity. Over the course of the present work, we will offer reasons for the standpoint that ethical reflection is a constituent element of human living that allows for development in the self and the social order.

This project follows a method of problem and response. It maintains that ethical theory should offer tools for ethical reflection. This involves identifying and responding to elements within ethical theory that contribute to the problem of ethical abnegation. In chapters two, three and four, we will offer accounts of the work of Alasdair MacIntyre, Charles Taylor and Bernard Lonergan. Each author, in his own manner, identifies features of ethical theory that can foster and even promote ethical abnegation. Chapter two will offer MacIntyre's critique of emotivism from the standpoint of an Aristotelian virtue ethic framework. Chapter three will treat Taylor's critique of subjectivism from the standpoint of the higher ideal of authenticity. For these authors, the principles of emotivism and subjectivism in ethical theories promote replacing personal preference for ethical reflection. MacIntyre and Taylor both argue that personal preference alone

cannot remain the basis of ethical reflection. As well, both authors provide accounts of the history of ethical theory that have set the conditions for the acceptability of such positions within contemporary Western cultures. On the basis of these historical accounts, they argue that reasoning about social goods and values is not only possible but necessary to engage in collaborative projects of living.

In chapter four, we will introduce the elements of Lonergan's work that can address the problem of ethical abnegation as presented by MacIntyre and Taylor. At the beginning of this chapter, we will note that, while MacIntyre and Taylor identify and respond to aspects involved in the problem of ethical abnegation, the resources for their proposed solutions forward are not available within their ethical theory. Still, their respective work provides historically informed portrayals of the role of ethical theory in cultural acceptance of mere preference as a viable model for ethical reflection. Moreover, their work provides entry points for relating how Lonergan's ethical framework provides tools for addressing ethical abnegation and for promoting ethical reflection. Even though he does not address MacIntyre and Taylor directly, Lonergan would agree with MacIntyre that reasoning about courses of action and standards are an essential component of collaboration that mitigates manipulation in the social sphere. He would also agree with Taylor that authenticity requires not only the discernment of preference but discernment of reasons for our actions and values as situated within shared horizons of meaning.

However, Lonergan's work does not primarily locate the elements of the problem of ethical abnegation in the history of ethical theory. Lonergan locates elements of the problem of ethical abnegation in the tensions and biases of the subject's polymorphic consciousness. In this way, chapter four provides an account of Lonergan's three stages of meaning; i.e., common

sense, theory and interiority. Whereas common sense relates all things, including new information, back to the current self's knowledge and care, theory endeavours to understand how things relate to other things in order to define and to be precise in its formulations. For common sense subjectivity, objects of the world are understood "in-relation-to-me." Theoretical subjectivity endeavours to go beyond the world-in-relation-to-me, to understand how things relate to each other. We will argue that tensions between the standpoints, languages and methods of these different modes of understanding lead to an ethically troubled consciousness that prompts one to opt for common sense ways of conceiving of ethical reflection over-against ethical theory. In this way, ethical theory becomes a weak force in correcting the misperceptions of ethical reflection according to common sense. Lonergan's response to troubled consciousness is to engage in the third stage of meaning: interiority. We will argue that developing an understanding of interiority allows the subject to realize that ethical theory and common sense derive from different concerns and modalities of consciousness.

Chapter four will provide Lonergan's account of the operations of ethical interiority or responsible consciousness. This account is based on an intentionality analysis and is offered as a methodology that can guide readers toward a heightened awareness and understanding of their own interiority. A person can draw on this theoretical account of responsible consciousness to become aware of its operations and dictates. For Lonergan, the basis of objectivity is authentic subjectivity. In other words, actually understanding and following the dictates of consciousness allows for authentic knowing and decision making. To engage in authentic acts of ethical reflection means considering how courses of action will contribute to the betterment of the self and to one's communal projects. This requires considering actions that are not merely based in motivations of preference or self-satisfaction. In other words, following the dictates of

responsible consciousness often means opting for value over-against current satisfaction. Insofar as we make judgments of value pertaining to our courses of action, we allow for genuinely valuable self-making and social contribution.

The operations of responsible consciousness are active and recurrent in the subject such that one will ask, “What should I do?” and “Is this right to do?” However, we often ask these questions in the common sense stage of meaning. In chapter five, we will treat Lonergan’s account of three biases of common sense; namely, individual, group and the general bias of common sense. Individual bias blocks considering the group’s well-being in favour of some self-interest. Group bias prevents consideration of persons and things outside of what is beneficial to the group. The general bias prevents one from taking the stance of theory or interiority. Common sense posits itself to be competent in all pursuits of knowing and deciding. This leaves the subject susceptible to allowing decisions to opt for what would seem to satisfy the self-as-is, which could either be based in self or group interest. Without following the dictates of ethical interiority, common sense’s biases influence decisions and the subject remains in her world-in-relation-to-herself.

Lonergan offers that one of the solutions to the general bias of common sense is moral conversion. Moral conversion is the process of transformation of horizons such that one can be habitually concerned with value in one’s living. This occurs through transformative experiences with value. The turn to interiority to self-appropriate moral transformation is required to understand its import for ethics. Moral conversion allows individuals to commit to the orientation to value and follow the dictates of responsible consciousness. When concerned with value, one endeavours to understand situations and to scrutinize whether her proposed courses of

action will lead to the betterment of the self and the social situation. However, moral conversion does not instigate moral perfection.

For Lonergan, there is a problem of liberation that is constituent of finite human living. We are perpetually restricted in our freedom to always know how to act before we do our acting. Because of our lack of knowledge we are limited in our freedom to always choose the good course of action. Though we do not always know how to act before we do, we can also lack an antecedent willingness to learn and to develop ethical skills and knowledge. Thus, even if we answer our own ethical questions, we can fail to choose the good because we do not know any better. Despair over the situation of our moral impotence can lead to ethical abnegation. Insofar as we give up on our responsible questioning, moral despair can lead to relying on preference or the demands of the group to dictate our behaviour. This can lead to stagnation or decline of the self and the social situation.

In chapter six, we provide Lonergan's account of the solution to the problem of liberation and the moral despair it engenders. For Lonergan, the solution is God's grace and the religious conversion of the subject. God's grace grants hope in the face of moral despair and confidence that one's good acts are contributions to the building up of value in God's world. Religious conversion transforms the horizons of the subject such that he is oriented by his love for God. By the strength of God's love, one is called to love others. Religious love or charity acts as an orienting concern that breaks the individual out of obsessive concern with the self and invites one to care for the other for the sake of one's relationship with God.

However, we will posit the challenge that charity can act as one orienting concern among many. The background for this challenge is presented in chapter five where we will treat the multiple concerns of the subject that can and often do divert attention away from value. At the

end of chapter six, we will pose the question, how is it possible for religious love to operate in ordinary experience in the common sense world? In chapter seven, we will provide an analysis of the dramatic pattern of experience and investigate its features based on its unique concern, source and terminal activity. Its terminal activity is envisioning forms of action and interaction in collaboration with others. We will posit that it promotes a specific withdrawal from common sense practicality within ordinary experience. Understanding the dramatic pattern will not provide all ingredients necessary to understand all the features of ordinary experience. However, when we withdraw from the blend of multiple concerns of ordinary experience and focus our understanding on the unique characteristics of the dramatic pattern itself, we gain insights into a central recurring aspect of ordinary experience that can aid investigation. Specifically, in chapter eight, we will argue for the possibility that the dramatic pattern of experience provides a means for understanding how moral and religious conversion may routinely operate as correctives to the limitations and biases of common sense within the course of ordinary experience.

In chapter eight, we will argue for the possibility that the dramatic pattern of experience can work with value and even promote responsible engagement. We will posit that there is a dramatic-aesthetic engagement in concrete collaboration that allows us to appreciate value. We will also argue that there is a dramatic-artistic withdrawal that allows us to envision and en-feel concrete collaborations with others. We will note that without a concern for value and the operations of responsible interiority, dramatic-aesthetic experiences and dramatic-artistic withdrawals cannot initiate reflection on value and enacting valuable action. These activities require ethical questioning in the stage of interiority. Responsible interiority allows us to inquire and to know about the concrete situation and reflect on courses of action in relation to how they will likely add value to the concrete situation.

To address this challenge, we will argue that it is possible for dramatic artistry to integrate value feelings that prompt us to engage in morally self-transcendent action. Dramatic artistry can draw on images and value feelings to construct its sketches of action. We will note that moral conversion involves the development of the discrimination of value feelings from feelings as intentional responses to the agreeable. It will be posited that moral conversion widens the scope of persons one images collaborating with, beyond self and group interest, for the sake of value. I will also posit that religious conversion, with its existential orientation toward love of God, can function within the dramatic pattern of experience to enable self-transcending feelings for the other beyond one's intersubjective group of belonging and those whom we have selected to care about and to value.

Based on the research findings, we propose that Lonergan's method for intentionality analysis advances the works of MacIntyre and Taylor on the topic of ethical abnegation. Lonergan's method treats the operations of responsible consciousness, different stages of meaning and patterns of experience and provides a theoretical framework for identifying features of the problem of ethical abnegation and its possible solutions in both ethical theory and interiority and thereby, provides a framework for self-appropriating tools that aid subjects in pursuing ethical reflection on social goods and values.

Throughout the present work we will note the tools available in Lonergan's work that have the potential to advance the project of MacIntyre and Taylor. In chapters four and five, we refer to the possibility of developing responsible interiority and moral conversion. The following chapters also refer to Lonergan's framework for differentiating among stages of meaning and multiple concerns that can facilitate moving back and forth between stages and concerns to promote ethical reflection. Chapter six offers Lonergan's account of the theological tools

available to advance the project of contending with ethical abnegation. In particular, theological categories can refer the subject to the need of God's grace and religious conversion to overcome despair and initiate a loving orientation to do good for others. Chapters seven and eight provide explanations for how Lonergan's account of the patterns of experience and in particular, the dramatic pattern of experience can facilitate loving orientation to God as a constituent dimension of ordinary experience. The explicability of Lonergan's tools for identifying and mitigating the challenges of ethical abnegation will be shown to provide justification for the present work's proposal that Lonergan's method advances MacIntyre and Taylor's project of enhancing ethical theory to promote ethical reflection.

Chapter 2

The Problem of Ethical Abnegation I: Insights from MacIntyre

In this chapter and the next, I explore the phenomenon of ethical abnegation. In particular, I am interested in the role played by ethical theory in sustaining a social climate that tolerates and even promotes ethical abnegation. I understand the expression, “ethical abnegation” to mean the disengagement from serious ethical reflection. As these chapters unfold, I provide greater detail on some of the features of ethical abnegation, and I outline compelling analyses offered by two prominent moral theorists, Alasdair MacIntyre and Charles Taylor, on the links between ethical abnegation and the history of moral theories. For the present, however, I would like to offer some preliminary clarifications related to ethical abnegation and some reasons why I have chosen MacIntyre and Taylor as partners in this exploration.

My exploration of ethical abnegation focuses mainly on disengagement from serious ethical reflection. There is also a way of thinking about ethical abnegation that focuses on ethical action. The issue here would be the disengagement from action in light of our ethical judgments and convictions. This too would be an important exploration. But it is not my focus in these chapters. My interest, rather, is in serious ethical reflection that aims at formulating and justifying values and courses of action that are more than merely arbitrary expressions of preference. The core questions in this engagement are: “What should I do?” and “Is this good to do?” Asking and answering these questions seriously requires that we question our familiar patterns and habits and entertain difficult or demanding courses of action in light of criteria that challenge us to grow ethically. Abnegation is opting, instead, for the easy, the familiar, the unquestioned, or the considerations or criteria that fail to reach beyond short-term or personal preference.

I have selected MacIntyre and Taylor as my partners in this exploration because each, in his own way, shares this interest in ethical abnegation, and each offers links between what he understands to be a rather frightening contemporary proliferation of this problem and the history of ethical theories. In addition, I have chosen them because their works tend to be championed by interlocutors at different points along the liberal-conservative ethical spectrum. Together, I believe they speak to a wide audience and they offer some compelling reasons why we would be wise to take this problem seriously. Also, they offer important points of entry into the work of Lonergan, and in later chapters I offer ways that I believe Lonergan advances the trajectory expressed by their discussions.

In my exploration of ethical abnegation I draw on the texts of MacIntyre and Taylor to illustrate different yet related ways they understand the current state of ethical theory to be deficient. Putting these analyses together, there emerges a startling argument that we confront serious problems that go to the roots of contemporary ethical theories – problems related to the coherence of methodology, a unifying goal for common ethical engagement, and workable schemata for social interaction. For the purposes of our discussion on ethical abnegation, this chapter will focus on these challenges as they relate to MacIntyre’s treatment of emotivism and the next chapter will focus on Taylor’s treatment of subjectivism. These two positions of ethical theory are identified by the authors as being both symptomatic of the current state of ethical reflection in culture, and prohibitive of serious ethical reflection if left unchecked by theory.

For MacIntyre and Taylor, popular notions of ethical reflection must be challenged insofar as they emphasize variations of emotivist and subjectivist theoretical principles. Emotivist and subjectivist theories share the stance that ethical reflection is rooted in the preferences of persons and not in some kind of rational account. In other words, these ethical

theories offer accounts of ethical reflection that do not challenge the subject to reflect on anything beyond her preferences. Hence, these theories promote ethical abnegation insofar as they do not offer reasons to investigate individual preferences outside of the context of the subject's current state of feeling, knowledge or skills. From this standpoint, it appears as though the discernment of preference is what ethical reflection is about and the power to choose and to enact that preference is ethical freedom.

For both MacIntyre and Taylor, the prevalence of emotivist and subjectivist ideas about ethical reflection is in part due to the decline in ethical theory's ability to make coherent sense within the Modern era. From their historical accounts, the ethical project of Enlightenment thinkers is to establish the theoretical grounds of ethical reflection and justification of decisions apart from a heritage of ethical meaning and knowing that includes an account of the social order or a motivating moral ideal. It will become evident through MacIntyre and Taylor's historical accounts of ethical theory that modernity's project fails because it lacks a proper accounting of social schemata or of the teleological function of goods. Without such fundamental referents for ethical reflection, ethical theory opens up to emotivist and subjectivist accounts of what ethical reflection is. Consequently, serious ethical reflection, which refers to reasons for choices or the discernment of goods, appears to be one option among many rather than a constituent component of ordinary living. In my view, without the justifiable option of ethical reasoning and discernment of goods we value, there is little need to challenge our habitual performance and preferences. This works with the basic desire for finding the easy and familiar way to do things. The emotivist and subjectivist option of conceiving of ethical reflection as discerning and choosing to follow one's personal preference *appears* to work easily and practically in the "real world."

However, both MacIntyre and Taylor argue in defence of the worth of ethical reasoning and argue for the development of an ethical theory that can surmount the challenge of emotivism and subjectivism. They offer historical accounts of the development and decline of ethical theory and utilize them for this defence and development forward. Taken together, the authors argue for the need of a more widely held theoretical account of ethics that can offer subjects a rational means to engage in serious ethical reflection. In this chapter, we begin with a section on MacIntyre's account and critique of emotivism. His critique utilizes the social schematic of practice drawn from an Aristotelian virtue ethic framework. This critique sets the stage for the second section where we explain MacIntyre's historical account of the decline of ethical theory. The analysis culminates in articulating the relationship between ethical theory's current state and ethical abnegation with a view to identifying the ways MacIntyre posits that ethical theory can encourage ethical reflection moving forward.

1. An Account of the Current State of Ethical Theory I: MacIntyre

The following section examines Alasdair MacIntyre's critique of emotivism and his particular conception of a practice as found in *After Virtue*.¹ Emotivism holds that moral judgments are merely expressions of preference or feelings. For MacIntyre, emotivism permeates Western culture's views on ethical reflection and it reinforces the interminable state of moral debate. In order to break the hold emotivism has on Western culture, its claims must be understood and critiqued in terms of both historical and sociological analysis. MacIntyre's account of practice is intended to be the first of three stages that form the conceptual background from which a core conception of the virtues can partially be derived. I contend that it is his account of practice that provides the key to understanding his argument for the inadequacy of

¹ Alasdair MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 3rd ed. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 187-203.

emotivist and subjectivist stances regarding the nature of the bases of moral reflection and judgments. Practices refer to cooperative human activity oriented by internal goods and standards of excellence. In order to illustrate the importance of MacIntyre's definition of a practice, I will elaborate on what MacIntyre asserts is the Nietzschean influence in the state of disorder in moral utterance and behaviour within our emotivist culture. This Nietzschean approach allows for a dramatic, if not honest, depiction of what the task of moral theory and activity should be if the emotivist analyses of moral judgments are true. It is in answering the question of how Nietzschean conclusions concerning morality may be refuted that the essential role of a practice for moral beliefs and behaviours will be demonstrated.

1.1. Emotivism in Culture and Embodied in the Social Situation

MacIntyre's analysis and critique of emotivism must be understood in light of his depiction of contemporary moral debate as involving three key features.² The first feature is the conceptual incommensurability of the arguments employed. Arguments on both sides of an issue are often based on premises that have fundamentally different evaluative criteria and thus, cannot speak to each other. Another feature of contemporary moral debate is that the arguments being employed purport to be impersonal. That is, they appeal to reasons that others can come to know and accept independently of the preferences of those who assert them. The final feature is that the pluralism of premises being employed are actually fragments taken out of context from their vastly different historical sources. The pluralistic and fragmentary mixture of premises is also part of the contemporary individual's horizons. We draw from a plurality of sources, such as the Bible, Marx and Kant, to guide and justify our practices. Thus, our moral language is fragmented

² MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 7-10.

and the “shrill” and “interminable”³ debate about moral issues has become a ubiquitous, if not accepted, facet of contemporary life.

The main view or philosophical position that reinforces this present state of moral debate, according to MacIntyre, is emotivism. “Emotivism is the doctrine that all evaluative judgments and more specifically moral judgments are *nothing but* expressions of preference, expressions of attitude or feeling, insofar as they are moral or evaluative in character.”⁴ In this way, moral judgments, unlike factual judgments, can neither be true nor false because there are no rational criteria to secure agreement on moral judgments. We can only reach agreement if one party succeeds in transforming the non-rational feelings and attitudes of the other party. Emotivist theory supports the interminable nature of our moral debate insofar as it claims that no objective or impersonal standards have *ever* existed to secure rational justification and thus, agreement about moral judgments has *never* been achieved through rational means.

For MacIntyre, the problem with emotivist assertions is that they do not take into consideration historical or sociological analyses of culture.⁵ Instead, these theories take the present culture’s implicit acceptance of emotivism to be the general case of moral utterance for all time. Yet, emotivism itself is part of a long historical development. An historical account of philosophy illustrates that emotivism is a reaction to the stance of intuitionism fathered by G.E. Moore, specifically in his *Principia Ethica* published in 1903. Emotivism, which purports to be a theory of meaning for all moral claims, is actually most cogently argued to be a theory of use about moral expression in Cambridge, England in the years following 1903. The emotivist critique of intuitionism would be that moral judgments that claim to be based in the intuition of a

³ MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 10.

⁴ MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 11-12. MacIntyre’s emphasis.

⁵ MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 15-23.

good, which is a non-natural property, is actually only a statement expressing attitude or feelings. In brief, emotivism tends to disregard its roots and the historical nature of moral philosophy. It does not allow for the possibility that at one point in our cultural history genuine objective and impersonal standards were agreed upon and that rational justification of practices happened.

According to MacIntyre, since emotivist theories lack exploration and development of a sociology, then one has to be constructed for them.⁶ Sociological analysis allows for a conceptual understanding of the social context that emotivist theory would create for moral agency. The key to understanding emotivism as a social context is to first understand that emotivism leads to the breakdown of the distinction between manipulative and non-manipulative relations in the social sphere. Our major social context that embodies this breakdown is bureaucratic structure. The key characters in these structures are managers. For MacIntyre, a character embodies cultural and moral ideals that others come to use to define themselves and their behaviours to navigate in the social drama. The manager is one of the characters in our culture that has become a focal point for moral definitions. Managers are successful when they efficiently use resources, whether material or human, to achieve predetermined ends. They do not engage in moral debate about these ends, but rather, they stick to the realm of means, where efficiency is quantifiable and thereby, factual. Ultimately, the manager embodies the emotivist principle that moral discourse is non-rational by manipulating the means at their disposal, including people, to given ends.

This above sociologically derived picture of emotivism as socially embodied in bureaucratic organization gives us a description of one of the two major modes of social life left open to the emotivist agent.⁷ For MacIntyre, the other mode is individualism. The emotivist self

⁶ MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 23-30.

⁷ MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 31-35.

does not take its cues from a particular social identity or from a *telos*. Inherited or imposed social roles no longer define us. Moreover, our culture is also suspicious of any teleology. Yet, roles and ends allow us to judge and make choices about what is good or better for our development. The two modes of social life, individualism and bureaucracy, are reflected in the bifurcated politics of modernity. One side promotes an agenda of individual liberty and the other promotes more planning and regulation to ensure the goods we all want. The emotivist agent is left to choose between the oscillating movements toward a limitless individualism or toward a greater empowerment of bureaucracy to control the free, though possibly anarchic, choices of individuals. In the long term, these two options are intolerable and unlivable for agents who have rational capacities and want to make choices related to goods and structures in the social situation. For now, the emotivist agent is left poorer in options towards meaningful and worthwhile action. Thus, emotivism as embodied in the social world leaves the moral agent with a choice to contribute toward two value impoverished projects of individualism or bureaucracy.

1.2. Consideration of Nietzsche or Aristotle Guiding Ethical Reflection

For MacIntyre, there are only two legitimate outlooks that allow us to understand and evaluate the contemporary state of disorder in moral utterance and practice, namely, philosophies of an Aristotelean or a Nietzschean variety.⁸ The reason why a Nietzschean approach to morality is so important is because Nietzsche is the only major philosopher to provide an extended analysis of the problem that faces the current state of morality. This problem derives from the failure of the Enlightenment project to provide a rationally sustainable account of objective standards for moral judgments. Philosophers such as Kant, Hume, Diderot, and others failed to find an objective and universal basis for justifying older moral codes in some element of human

⁸ MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 32-43.

nature such as reason or the passions. Eventually, in the thought of Kierkegaard, personal choice to follow the dictates of a particular moral principle failed to provide objective standards for moral agency. Attempts at providing a new end for human action, such as Mill's notion of utility, also failed. Ultimately, these philosophers succeeded in providing the way for an emotivist analysis of moral judgments and agreements.

MacIntyre contends that our culture acts, talks and thinks "*as if*" emotivist premises were true.⁹ The strength of the Nietzschean position is its seeming honesty insofar as it corresponds to the state of our present emotivist culture. The key doctrine of emotivism is that all moral judgments are based, not in the authority of objective standards or some shared good, but rather, all moral judgments have always been expressions of preference based in feelings and attitudes. Moral agreement is not achieved through rational persuasion, but through changing the feelings or attitudes of others in the disagreement. Nietzsche's verdict on moral judgments and agreement is similar in character to these emotivist premises, but what sets him apart are his radical and unflinching conclusions from these premises.¹⁰ Nietzsche contends that all rational arguments for an objective morality have failed because they are in actuality disguises for the non-rational will. If all purportedly rational moral theory, utterance and practice are just a series of disguises for the will, then let will replace reason and let us become that which we truly are. We are beings that create our own values and rules. Thus, the real problem that moral theory and practice must face is not how to rationally vindicate morality, but how to construct in an original way a new table of values and laws suited to the will's pursuit of power.

⁹ MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 22.

¹⁰ MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 110-115.

Nietzsche's depiction of the ideal type of "the great man" embodies the rejection of the use of current and past moral conceptions and language because they are misleading fictions.¹¹ The great man also rejects the idea of any shared goods or virtues that would mediate his relationships with others. Moral sentiments, greatest happiness for the greatest number, utility, conscience, and the categorical imperative are all expressions of the will disguised as goods and standards. There is only the will and its power to create and thus, the Nietzschean great man is charged with the duty of going through life alone, consciously manipulating others and creating his own moral authority. MacIntyre commends the startling honesty of Nietzsche's analysis and conclusions. For MacIntyre, the Enlightenment project did fail and the current state of moral utterance does depend on mostly misunderstood fragments of rational premises once at home in the context of the thought of Kant, Marx, Hume and others.¹² Although these fragmented moral premises are rationally incompatible with one another and seemingly arbitrarily chosen, they are also purported to be impersonal rational premises. All of this amounts to the state of contemporary moral debate where arguments are shrill in tone and conclusions are never reached. Moral agency is just a matter of choosing the standpoint from which to argue and criticize the chosen and arbitrary viewpoints of another. But, is a Nietzschean analysis the only way to understand this disordered state and then overcome it? In other words, is the Nietzschean verdict on morality true?

To answer the above question MacIntyre pinpoints the central Nietzschean thesis that leads one to conclude that the central problem of morality is to create a new set of values in an original way. At the heart of the Nietzschean stance is the thesis that all rational accounts of

¹¹ MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 257-258.

¹² MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 117-118.

objective moral standards and goods have failed.¹³ Yet, the Nietzschean project of founding a new morality based in the recognition of the will to power could be rendered pointless if an account of a set of moral principles and their social implications can be made rationally coherent. For MacIntyre, an account of the Aristotelian moral tradition, in which the virtues play a central role, can be made rationally coherent and therefore, is not susceptible to a Nietzschean critique. Moreover, the Aristotelian moral tradition also provides a way of understanding how the Nietzschean great man is actually an unnecessarily isolated and morally impoverished being. In order to return to one of the central points of this chapter I will ask, how does MacIntyre's conception of practice provide support to these two claims?

1.3. MacIntyre's Account of Practice

To begin with, MacIntyre's account of practice is situated within his arguments for a core concept of the virtues.¹⁴ It provides a point of continuity for MacIntyre's account of the history of the Aristotelian moral tradition. If, as MacIntyre asserts, every philosophy presupposes a sociology, his philosophical account of the core concept of the virtues must be situated within a reasonably formulated vision of social relations. In this way, one must understand MacIntyre's conception of the virtues as deriving its features from three stages of a developmental matrix that includes a vision of social and moral life. This matrix begins with (1) an account of practice, followed by (2) an account of the narrative unity of a whole human life and finally, (3) an account of a moral tradition. It is only by virtue of this background matrix that one can make an account of the virtues intelligible and thereby, to show how an Aristotelian moral tradition could reasonably function. Thus, MacIntyre's notion of practice can be considered as both an important

¹³ MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 117. MacIntyre's emphasis.

¹⁴ MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 186-187.

social locus for the exercise of the virtues and a conceptual stage that makes his definition of virtues intelligible.

The first and most crucial stage for understanding the core conception of the virtues within the Aristotelian tradition is to recognize how the virtues find their point and function in a very particular understanding of *practice*. For MacIntyre, a practice is:

any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended.¹⁵

I will examine three central features of this definition of practice beginning with the notion of *internal goods*, which is then followed by explanations of *standards of excellence* and *cooperative human activity*. Internal goods are realised only through participating in the activities of a practice and trying to achieve the standards of excellence that make up a practice.¹⁶

Another way to understand internal goods is by contrasting them with external goods. External goods such as money and prestige can be attained through various activities; internal goods can only be attained through engaging in a particular practice. For example, a person may be motivated to master the skills of portrait painting to produce excellent portraits because of the external good of money or prestige. One might also be motivated to master these skills and paint well because of the particular goods internal to portrait painting. Achieving internal goods involves one learning, executing and extending the relevant skills of portrait painting, such as lighting effects, balance of colours, understanding and reproducing forms. These internal goods are specific to the practice of portrait painting and all internal goods are equally particularized to

¹⁵ MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 187.

¹⁶ MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 189-191.

a given practice. This implies that only participants in these practices have evaluative authority to judge the goods internal to these activities.

There are two kinds of internal goods and both involve attaining standards of excellence. The first is the excellence of the product and the performance. To both produce and perform excellently means one has reached the historically given standards of a practice or that one has pushed, for the better, the limits of these standards by surpassing them. To surpass standards entails that one has introduced or extended a particular human power which then enhances the practice for the relevant community of practitioners. The second kind of good is the life that is informed and shaped by pursuing and reaching up to a practice's standards of excellence. In meeting and accepting the challenges of the standards of excellence and in trying to seek for progress in the practice, one lives a life oriented by the practice. This means solving, with creative ingenuity, the problems that the practice might face as well as the personal struggles that confront one in the pursuit of excellence. Again, judgment on these goods cannot be made by someone who is not engaged in the practice or at least, learning as an apprentice what the practitioner teaches.

Practices not only involve the attainment of internal goods and reaching up to their standards of excellence, they also entail subordinating oneself to these standards.¹⁷ One is initiated into a practice by first accepting that there are standards of excellence and then learning how to achieve them. This involves accepting one's own limitations and inadequacies in comparison to these standards. One must be willing to undergo transformation of one's preferences, attitudes, choices, tastes in order to reach the standards set by the practice. These standards are not immune to criticism or change but, one must be willing to accept the best

¹⁷ MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 191.

standards available thus far. This means recognizing that others know more and better than I do about the internal goods in these practices and how to judge these goods. For MacIntyre, the standards and goods involved in practices “rule out all subjectivist and emotivist analyses of judgment. *De gustibus est disputandum.*”¹⁸ Recognizing the authority of both goods and standards within practices is one crucial way of realizing how the emotivist and subjectivist rejection of the objective status of moral judgments does not consider all facets of historical or contemporary moral life.

Entering into a practice also entails that one enters into a cluster of relationships with other practitioners both past and present.¹⁹ It is the virtues that characterize the nature and quality of the relationships that we build. For MacIntyre, all practices require the exercise of honesty, courage and justice so that the goods internal to the practice may flourish and its standards of excellence may progress. The exercise of the virtue of honesty allows for the mutual trust needed for each practitioner to rely on the other’s findings, skills, ideas and judgments. Courage also is needed to defend and promote the practices one cares for at the risk of endangering the quality of one’s own life. Finally, justice must be exercised to allow for the fair distribution of what each practitioner deserves. It is only through the subordination of our tastes, feelings and preferences to the excellences of the virtues exercised between practitioners that allows one to achieve the goods internal to a practice. Without the exercise of virtues, practices stagnate and decline because the relationships between practitioners would break down. Thus, it is in the context of a practice that the core concept of virtues gains its central, although incomplete, definition. Practices are also the central social context in which we can exercise the virtues.

¹⁸ MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 190. “There is disputing taste.”

¹⁹ MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 191-194.

Moreover, the conception of a practice provides a focal point for the rational vindication of the objective standards and goods that could be made available to the moral agent. That a rational case can be made in which practices provide their own internal goods and standards of excellence is enough to suggest how it is that the greatness of Nietzschean man, who embodies emotivist premises and their conclusions, is based on a false understanding of the nature of all morality. The same standards of excellence that allowed Nietzsche to achieve the internal goods of his philosophical practice, such as can be found in *The Gay Science*, also allowed him to excel at explaining the problematic nature of morality. In other words, Nietzsche is himself a practitioner who achieved goods based on living up to the standards of excellence that he received from his relevant community of past and contemporary philosopher-practitioners. Thus, Nietzsche's great man is another moral fiction that unnecessarily places the agent in a moral solipsism that effectively cuts one off from the communities of practice that give objective standards to moral judgments and activities.

1.4. Summation

We have seen that, for MacIntyre, the predominant moral stance of our social life is an emotivism of a Nietzschean variety.²⁰ It purports that the real motivating forces of human action are desires or preferences and not rational considerations. The idea that rational argumentation has ever resolved moral conflict is an illusion, and reasons are guises for what individuals and groups desire. Persuading others to one's purposes happens at the level of emotion and is achieved through manipulation of emotions. Emotivism as embodied in social interaction is an untenable long-term option for individuals who want to navigate within social projects toward communally established goods. Since emotivism purports that all agreement stems from the

²⁰ MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 109-120.

persuasion of preferences then there is no need to search for rational criteria to allow others to decide his or her stance on the issue. All that is needed is a preference and the means to persuade others to such preferences. Hence, an emotivist orientation leads to the breakdown of the distinction between manipulative and non-manipulative relations in the social sphere.

The current state of ethical theory has allowed for emotivist stances on ethical reflection as viable frameworks to justify preference and the seemingly interminable debate of moral issues. But, as we have noted in this section, coherent ethical reflection is possible within a virtue ethics framework situated within a social context of practices. Through participation in these practices we learn their standards of excellence, endeavour to achieve them and thereby, promote goods internal to those practices. These standards are learned from others and from the basis of rational support for our reflections and moral judgments regarding our action and the direction of practices.

Unlike in emotivist social situations, our relationships with others in practices need not be manipulative. Rather, practices require the exercise of virtues if subjects want to maintain their standards and goods. Honesty, justice and courage are essential characteristics of action that allow for the maintenance of functional relationships with others. Without functional relationships among practitioners, practices could not flourish. Still, not everyone in Western culture may know that the virtue ethic framework as situated within the social context of practices allows for a coherent framework for ethical reflection and decisions. For MacIntyre, an historical account needs to be told about how this framework was lost and how we arrived at emotivist theory as a viable option to understand our moral reflection. According to MacIntyre, this history is epoch making for ethical theory, but, this history has not been told.

2. An Historical Account of Catastrophe in Ethical Theory: Stages of Decline

We turn now to MacIntyre's historical account of ethical theory's development and decline in three stages. Ethical reflection need not be viewed in an emotivist way as a vehicle for discerning preference. For MacIntyre, there are elements in the Western tradition of ethical theory that can be called upon to heighten our ability to engage in rational and coherent ethical reflection so that we can engage with others in moral debate about values, social goods and standards that will not lead to shrill and interminable debate. While the current state of ethical theory may allow for theories such as emotivism, this does not have to be the only viable option for a model of ethical reflection. MacIntyre's schema of three stages of ethical theory provides both a diagnosis of and a prescription for the current state of ethical theory. At the end of this chapter, we will draw conclusions that relate these stages to ethical abnegation as well as MacIntyre's prescription toward heightening the subject's capacity for ethical reflection. For MacIntyre, the contemporary culture is in need of a reintroduction to the first stage of moral theory to provide a framework for coherent moral reflection; this stage of moral theory can be identified with the Aristotelian virtue ethic framework.

2.1. *MacIntyre's Stages of Ethical Theory*

However, MacIntyre presents the first stage and all three stages as though the schema of decline could happen anywhere and anytime. Still, he clearly uses the schema throughout *After Virtue* to categorize certain thinkers and theories according to these three stages. The first stage is represented by an Aristotelian kind of virtue ethics situated within a practice and its tradition. MacIntyre asserts of this stage that:

evaluative and more especially moral theory and practice embody genuine objective and impersonal standards which provide rational justification for particular policies, actions and judgments and which themselves in turn are susceptible of rational justification.²¹

MacIntyre seeks to reanimate this stage in the philosophical and historical imagination of the contemporary culture. The second stage is populated by modern philosophers and in particular those who follow Kant as heralding moral reason as self-legislative and emanating from the individual. According to MacIntyre, their attempts to ground standards of moral reason in terms different than practices and traditions fail.

Emotivism represents the third stage where, given the seeming failure of the second stage as well as implicit acceptance in practice, it is declared that appeal to rational and objective criteria has never resolved disagreements concerning ends and goals of communities.²² Whereas the Aristotelian schema provides a first or prime example of what moral reflection could be, emotivist theories of morality represent a breakdown of moral understanding. According to MacIntyre, Western culture is in the third stage where impersonal and objective standards of morality seem so debatable as to be non-existent, as emotivism claims. To promote ethical reflection we need a return of a comprehensible framework for our ethical judgments and decisions.

2.2. The First Stage of Ethical Theory

MacIntyre's depiction of the first stage of reflection on moral practice is rooted in the ancient Greek tradition of the virtues from the epic poetry of Homer to the systematic expression of Aristotle. Providing a coherent account of this stage is central to the whole project of *After Virtue*. It is the stage where virtue ethics developed into a systematic account of moral reasoning

²¹ MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 18-19.

²² MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 181-225.

that could provide an alternative to Nietzschean and emotivist accounts of ethics. MacIntyre argues that Western culture derived much of its moral vocabulary from this virtue ethics stage. However, the social and historical context of this vocabulary has been lost. We no longer spontaneously view social organization in the same ways as the ancient Greeks did. The golden age of Greek culture gave way to the Roman, and the Roman culture fell into the Dark Ages. As many historians have noted, the Dark Ages were not so dark. Religious communities kept the works of Greek and Roman thinkers alive while also maintaining the kind of social organization where the terminology and reasoning of virtue ethics made sense. That is, small communities of persons with roles and obligations were oriented toward common goals.

According to MacIntyre, the virtue ethic framework calls for entering into ethical inquiry through a practice with a community and a tradition. One gains ethical knowledge as one engages in learning the expectations and standards for judgments and actions within a practice such as painting, debating or performing scientific experiments. Virtue develops within the self as one engages with the practicing community in such a way that one is, for example, honest, just and courageous in her relationships with others. The community works together virtuously to enhance the standards of excellence of the activities inherent to the practice. This picture of a virtue-oriented practice points to a possible way of living that does appeal to rational justification and criteria within communities to resolve conflicts and work toward similar goals. For rational justification to function this way, one needs to enter into a community of practitioners and be willing to learn from the traditional standards of excellence internal to the community's practices.

Thus, for MacIntyre, to engage in virtue ethics requires the establishment of a social situation that allows for practices and ethical traditions. As well, on the more personal level,

there must be a sense of the narrative unity of one's life oriented by a quest to lead the good life. Presumably, this quest would serve to fill in the modern gap of an overarching *telos* of human conduct. The quest for the good life is seemingly a good in itself and committing to it "enable[s] us to understand what more and what else the good life for man is."²³ Virtues are dispositions that allow one to sustain practices and enable us to achieve the goods internal to those practices. They also sustain us in our quest for the good allowing us to overcome temptations and distractions or navigate harms and dangers. Virtue development is for the sake of completing our tasks and the larger quest for the good life.

The commitment to the quest for the good life is capable of motivating individuals to be ethical throughout all spheres of life, even apart from practices. In this way, MacIntyre commends Jane Austen's emphasis on the virtue of constancy and champions her novels as one of the last, if not the last, representation of the social situation required to live virtuously.²⁴ For MacIntyre, there were many incarnations of social organizations where virtue ethics could make sense throughout the Middle Ages and even into the Modern era. Situated within these social contexts, there were theorists and thinkers such as Aquinas, Benjamin Franklin and Jane Austen who took up the virtue ethic tradition and built upon it. Though Aquinas is the most influential thinker to do this, MacIntyre offers only a brief sketch of the Christian theologian's thought in *After Virtue*. He will treat the Thomistic tradition in *Three Rival Versions of Moral Inquiry*.²⁵ The brief sketch of Thomistic thought in *After Virtue* is surprising given MacIntyre's goal of providing a historical account of the rejection of the virtue ethic tradition. Arguably, the virtue

²³ MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 219.

²⁴ MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 183; 238-240.

²⁵ See, Alasdair MACINTYRE, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*. (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990).

ethic tradition became so identified with Christianity and in particular, Roman Catholic Christianity, that rejecting one meant rejecting the other. For my purposes of providing an exposition of MacIntyre's account of moral decline in history, I note that the tradition of virtue ethics, which includes such thinkers as Aristotle, Aquinas, and Austen, is situated as the first and most comprehensible stage in moral practice and its reflection.

2.3. *The Second and Third Stages of Ethical Theory*

However, as *After Virtue* dramatically posits, the subsequent decline of moral understanding, reasoning and agreement is like a catastrophe for culture.²⁶ It is analogous to an extinction event wiping away most of life leaving the survivors to eke out an existence among the ruin. On the level of cultural moral reflection, we are left with the scraps and fragments of a lost social-historical context. As we shall note, without this context, we use words like "good," "right," "obligation," in much the same way as the Polynesians used "taboo" in the nineteenth century.²⁷ We have difficulties defining and using them. We do not know how the pieces fit together and so we cannot justify their use.

MacIntyre does not identify the moral disaster with any particular time or catalyst. Neither is there an account of the transitions of social and historical contexts from the first to the second stage of moral decline. This may be a sign of wise selection rather than thoughtless omission as history has many channels of development and decline. It may be that the second stage of moral decline parallels the emergence of the Modern Epoch from the Middle Ages. Here, we can point to the social changes of the fifteenth century rise of cities over agricultural communities and the rise of industrialization in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. One could also point to the

²⁶ MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 1-5.

²⁷ MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 113.

rise of the modern nation state in Europe that traces its origins to the wars of religion culminating in the Thirty Years War. The Thirty Years War ended with the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) that, among other things, asserted the religious freedom of persons within any of the signatory nations. The upshot of religious tolerance is mitigating violence and civil war. The unexpected consequence of this religious tolerance is a new problem of foundations for morality. How do we base moral reflection and theory in something other than religion? We need something universal that we can all agree upon.

Where MacIntyre does begin the analysis of the second stage of moral decline is with Enlightenment philosophers. For MacIntyre, Enlightenment philosophers try and fail to find rational justification of moral judgments apart from the moral schema of Aristotelian tradition. There are three components to this system.²⁸ The first is an account of human potential or what the person is like. There is also the *telos* or the goal of the human being. The third component is an accounting of how a person develops their potential such that they can achieve their *telos*. Coming after the scientific revolution, the philosophers of the Enlightenment largely rule out human *telos*. This is primarily because an ultimate human end is not empirically observable. In the hands of Kant, for example, God and the human end are seen as ideas of the mind postulated by reason to make sense of the world. Moreover, rather than look outward for indications of moral reasoning, Enlightenment philosophers looked inward and focused on “human potential or what the person is like.” As outward traditions and practices are contingent, philosophers sought to ground morality in a universal conception of human capacities. In this way, Enlightenment philosophers argued over depictions of moral reason and the interactions among reason,

²⁸ MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 52-61.

judgment, emotion, understanding and will. Moral development is seen as understanding and using the inner capacity of moral reasoning rather than achieving particular goals or goods.

What second stage philosophers do not realize is that a sophisticated account of the human person's capacity for moral judgment cannot stand alone. Without an adequate accounting of the social sphere (practice) or human goals, moral judgments appear arbitrary and nonsensical. What is potentially worse about this conception of morality is that it gives the impression that one's own context and tradition does not matter. This helps to explain how it is possible for philosophers like G.E. Moore at Cambridge University in the early twentieth century to discount his own historical context when arriving at his intuitionist moral philosophy.²⁹ For Moore, it did appear that morality was intuitively grasped by the individual. For MacIntyre, Moore's philosophy is embraced largely because of the sedimentation of older moralities that seem to offer more restrictions than actual sense about morality. In this way, Moore is a representative of the transition from the second to the third stage of moral decline. This is because he still maintained that there was a point to moral reflection besides discovering one's preferences or search for dominance. Ultimately, as his emotivist students would point out, Moore's moral intuitions are rooted in the individual's feeling a certain way about something. Further, these emotivist students would take Moore's context-less philosophizing as that which all philosophers of morality did and do in the past and the present.

Representative thinkers of the third stage of moral decline are Nietzsche and emotivists like A.J. Ayer.³⁰ In Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*, he surveys the multiple attempts of the Enlightenment era philosophers to justify and ground moral judgments in an account of some

²⁹ MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 14-20.

³⁰ MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 86; 112-113.

aspect of human nature or objective law. His critiques appear to easily shatter the assertions of moral philosophy exposing them as groundless. Still, Nietzsche is not exactly breaking down something that was built well and in good order. MacIntyre compares Nietzsche to King Kamehameha II who, in 1819, abolishes the “taboo system” in Polynesia.³¹ The King met with little resistance because the “system” was already in such grave disorder that no one knew what taboo meant. MacIntyre speculates that at one point the taboos made sense within a certain social-historical context. When this context was lost, the use of taboo prohibitions and prescriptions no longer made coherent sense, but, they were still used. MacIntyre compares the term taboo to Western ethical terminology such as “good,” “right,” “obligatory.” We use terms like “right” and “good” as though we understand them, but, if pressed, we do not. Without the context of practices and traditions, our moral vocabulary has no secure referent.

2.4. Summation

MacIntyre’s account of the three stages of ethical theory provides an explanation for the fragmentary state of Western moral sources and the incompatible premises used for moral reflections. Whether when we are in debate with others or when we are reflecting by ourselves, we draw from a mixture of moral sources that can leave us uncertain about the grounds of the moral judgments we make. Our debate and moral reflection over issues that matter socially and individually are seemingly interminable. Emotivism offers an easy explanation for this state of disorder and that is, moral reflection has always been about stating preferences and manipulating others to hold those same preferences. However, according to MacIntyre’s account of the stages of ethical theory, the more challenging but more coherent solution to the state of interminable debate is to reintroduce the first stage of ethical theory and its social context. In this way,

³¹ MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 111-114.

subjects situated in Western culture could begin to pursue rational and coherent moral reflection and judgment.

Conclusion

MacIntyre's analysis of the current state of moral reflection is sobering if not bleak for the incoming student of ethical theory. In *After Virtue*, we are presented with a story of the decline of moral reflection that ends in a stage that denies the worth of reflection on standards or goods. Such purported standards and goods of the past and present are just masquerades of preference or even a bare will. If MacIntyre's historical account of the decline of ethical theory is to be believed, we must face the possibility that the problem with moral reflection is not that moral reason about standards and goods has never existed, but, that current conditions facilitate moral decline. Whether or not these conditions are irrevocably destroyed, the current state of moral theory is difficult to navigate. A person caught in the culture of emotivism and its social organizations has little opportunity to pursue the matter as one is today left to explore theoretical accounts of moral reflection within a context of individualism or bureaucracy. What are subjects to do in these social conditions that are un conducive to ethical reflection?

At the end of *After Virtue*, MacIntyre posits that we could hope for a new kind of Saint Benedict type who can lead a new revolution of communal living to fight off these new Dark Ages. This statement of hope points to one of the limitations of MacIntyre's prescriptions for the current state of ethical theory. It seems as though the social situation must change toward implementing practices such that subjects could reflect on objective standards to give coherent reasons for achieving internal goods. Moreover, though MacIntyre states that the Aristotelian virtue ethic framework is one example of the first and most comprehensible stage of moral theory and reflection, he does not provide an alternative framework for a first stage ethical

theory. Thus, MacIntyre's readers are left with the impression that there is only the Aristotelian virtue ethic framework for rationally and coherently thinking through and arriving at moral judgments and decisions. We will discuss these limitations in more detail in chapter four.

However, the point of our analysis and dialogue with MacIntyre is to identify and articulate the problem of ethical abnegation and the ways the current state of ethical theory is conducive to this problem. In this regard, MacIntyre's *After Virtue* is significant and worth building upon. Specifically, it identifies the elements of contemporary culture that are emotivist and it offers an explanation of the development of ethical theory to the point where emotivism becomes a viable option to explain moral utterance and reflection.

MacIntyre's critique and analysis of contemporary ethical theory also allows for a statement on the way that it promotes or is conducive to ethical abnegation. Emotivism offers a view of ethical reflection that undermines the value of ethical reasoning. It is an easy way to justify inadvertence to ethical questions such as, "What should I do?" and "Is this good to do?" The answer of emotivism to the first question is to do what is dictated by your preference. The answer to the second question is achieved through reflecting on the good of those proposed actions based on your preferences. Hence, ethical reflection amounts to discerning preference. Without standards of reason, why bother learning anything more than how to discern preference and the means to manipulate others toward those preferences? Without a worthwhile reason for serious ethical reflection, the subject becomes self-enclosed and lacks willingness to challenge her familiar and habitual actions. There is a self-centred streak to emotivism that cannot be denied. When we turn to Charles Taylor's analysis of the current state of ethical theory, there is a focus on parsing out the self-centredness of subjectivist moral stances regarding ethical

reflection. For Taylor, there can be discerned a moral ideal at the root of these more self-centred modes of ethical reflection: authenticity.

Chapter 3

The Problem of Ethical Abnegation II: Insights from Taylor

Compared to MacIntyre, Taylor is more optimistic about Western moral theory's ability to promote comprehensible moral reflection. For MacIntyre, ethical theory is in a stage of decline and its inability to make sense to us fosters disagreement about how to do moral reflection. The ramifications of the decline of moral theory and reflection are experienced each day in popular culture. The simple explanation, adopted by many, is that moral reasoning never made sense in the first place, but MacIntyre argues that morality did make sense within the Aristotelian virtue ethic tradition. For Taylor, we cannot simply reject the moral outlook of our culture, but rather, we must understand its motivating ideal of authenticity or being true to oneself. He posits that ethical theory ought to account for the ideal, its historical developments and its requirements. In the first section of this chapter, we explore Taylor's Best Account Principle as a foundation for his assertions about the essential component of the teleological function of goods for ethical reflection. The principle challenges ethical theory to take ordinary moral experience seriously and this includes reflection on values that inform choices and identity. These assertions about goods can be extended to the moral ideal of authenticity. Moreover, reasoning about strongly valued goods is essential to fulfilling the ideal. However, as we will note in the first section, there are those in the contemporary field of ethics that discount the validity of teleological goods and moral ideals as too subjective and unreal to found an ethical theory. Taylor critiques such stances and the emphasis on disengaged reason as the ideal of moral reflection. Ordinary moral experience ought to be accounted for in ethical theory whereas disengaged reason is an exception rather than the rule in practical reflection. Through

the Best Account (BA) principle Taylor argues for the central and meaningful place goods have and should have in ethical theory.

In the second section, we will explore Taylor's historical account of the higher and lower variants of the ideal of authenticity. As well, we treat his historical account of the dialectical moments that have led to the lower variants of this ideal within contemporary ethical thought. These moments reflect a subjectivist view of the ideal. We will note that subjectivist views of moral reflection and justification are rooted in a misplaced emphasis on the self as the source of our moral reflection and agency. For Taylor, the moral ideal of authenticity ought to be articulated and raised up as a means to be responsible and to encourage moral reflection. This involves maintaining openness to horizons of significance beyond the self and dialogue with others about values and social goods. As we did in the last chapter with MacIntyre's analysis of contemporary ethical theory, we will offer links between Taylor's analysis and ethical abnegation. We will also note Taylor's suggestions for moving forward in ethical theory toward fostering a more intelligible account of ethical reflection situated in reaching up to the higher ideal of authenticity.

We conclude the chapter with reflections on the nature of the problem of ethical abnegation fostered by current ethical theory according to Taylor and MacIntyre's accounts. We will note that there are more challenges to engaging in serious ethical reflection than emotivist and subjectivist theories. Such challenges are articulated in the work of Lonergan and we will turn to this work in the chapters that follow. Still, MacIntyre and Taylor's analyses of current ethical theory and their defense of serious ethical reflection as including reasoning about goods and a shared moral ideal provides context and an entry point for our discussions of ethical abnegation.

1. An Account of the Current State of Ethical Theory II: Taylor

The key to Taylor's diagnosis of the current state of ethics is his "Best Account Principle"¹ (BA Principle) found explicitly in his work *Sources of the Self* and utilized in *The Malaise of Modernity*. According to the principle, a moral claim of ethical theory ought to account for how ethics is done in everyday living. However, current analytic streams in ethical theory, following moderns such as Descartes and Kant, maintain an ideal of disengaged reason that separates moral reflection from ordinary living. Living out the ideal of authenticity is seemingly impossible if moral reasoning is conceived as only pursuable via a disengaged reason. This is because we must understand our own moral ideals in light of ordinary living if we want to fulfill them concretely. In the following section, we will explain and explore the BA principle according to three basic positions pertaining to the essential role of values in ethical reflection. These positions allow for a critique of disengaged reason as the sole mode of ethical reflection. At the end of this section, we offer a statement on the relationship between the ideal of disengaged reason and ethical abnegation.

The BA principle is developed and used as a criterion for the genuineness of moral claims in Taylor's *Sources of the Self*.² Generally, the principle takes the stand that a claim of ethical theory has to be able to make sense of how ethics is done in everyday living. Ethical theory ought to strive to provide the clearest explanation of what a subject engaged in ethics is doing and not contradict basic positions that make this engagement possible. Taylor posits three such basic positions of ethical engagement: (1) strongly valued goods are indispensable for an account of ethical reflection; (2) these goods are real; (3) one can reason about goods. In the

¹ Charles TAYLOR, *Sources of the Self, The Making of Modern Identity*. (New York, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 58-59.

² TAYLOR, *Sources*, 106.

following paragraphs, I will elaborate on these positions that Taylor defends and reinforces throughout his work in *Sources of the Self* and *The Malaise of Modernity*.

1.1. Strongly Valued Goods: Indispensable for Ethical Reflection and Theory

In order to give the best account of ethical engagement and reflection, one must have recourse to strongly valued goods. Without these goods many of the elements of what we consider part of ethical reflection would not make sense. These elements include “deliberating, judging situations, [and] deciding how you feel about people.”³ Strongly valued goods or hypergoods are “goods which not only are incomparably more important than others but provide the standpoint from which these must be weighed, judged, [and] decided about.”⁴ Taylor gives the example of “universal justice and/or benevolence.”⁵ Equal respect for all people has become a hypergood that commands respect and even awe individually and collectively.

Though they may be amended, hypergoods are unlike ordinary goods in that they provide standards of conduct that orient us throughout our living.⁶ We go through life caring about attaining certain overarching goods rather than others and making moves to attain them. Whether the goods are ordinary or hyper, one needs something to value to assess the relative merits of a situation and to decide what needs to be done about it. Moreover, we need recourse to the terms of goods if we want to understand ourselves or others. Value terms are needed for such basic moral tasks as “assessing his conduct, grasping her motivation, coming to see what you were really about all these years.”⁷

³ TAYLOR, *Sources*, 59.

⁴ TAYLOR, *Sources*, 63.

⁵ TAYLOR, *Sources*, 64.

⁶ TAYLOR, *Sources*, 20.

⁷ TAYLOR, *Sources*, 59.

Taylor defends our use of value terms within the domain of ordinary moral living but also asserts their necessity in ethical theory. The BA principle stands against more naturalistic scientific accounts where philosophers seek to explain the subject's ethical activities as one would explain natural phenomena in the universe. The sticking point could be that the best account of what we are doing ethically will never be explanatory enough to fit within a physical account of the universe. But, for Taylor this should not ever be the goal for ethical accounts. As Taylor asserts,

Just as physical science is no longer anthropocentric, so human science can no longer be couched in the terms of physics. Our value terms purport to give us insight into what it is to live in the universe as a human being, and this is a quite different matter from that which physical science claims to reveal and explain.⁸

Our value terms are as real as the objects of science even if they are dependent on us for their existence. To rule everyday moral experiences of value out of court is to encourage a tendency in contemporary ethics for division between ethical theory and ordinary responsible engagement. The point of the first position is that we need to use terms that refer to moral experience of strongly valued goods to understand ourselves and others.

1.2. Valued Goods Are Real

Affirming the reality of strongly valued goods is the second basic position involved in maintaining the BA principle. Taylor defines the real as “what you have to deal with, what won't go away just because it doesn't fit with your prejudices.”⁹ Here again Taylor is addressing a naturalist stance on ethics and in particular those that claim projectionist views on values and moral judgments. These views tend to follow Hume's fact/value split where values are not empirically observable and therefore, mere projections of the mind. The projection view of

⁸ TAYLOR, *Sources*, 59.

⁹ TAYLOR, *Sources*, 59.

values is not supported by moral experience. We do live oriented by goods. A non-realist stance on these goods thereby has a troubling effect. We are asked to call into question the goods that we so care about that they shape our identity. Without these hypergoods, we do not make sense to ourselves. An ethical theory that asserts goods as unreal is incompatible with moral experience where demands are made on us by these goods. Following from the BA principle, “what you can’t help having recourse to in life is real, or as near to real as you can get a grasp of at present.”¹⁰ One must account for strongly valued goods in one’s ethical theory. If one’s metaphysical, epistemological or scientific viewpoint cannot account for what is most basic to moral experience, then it is not thereby rational to reject what is most basic to moral experience just to assert one’s viewpoint.

A key statement of Taylor’s philosophical anthropology is that human beings are self-interpreting animals.¹¹ This means that who we are is an open question. Modernity is awake to the question of identity. It may not know how to answer it. Essential to answering this open question are what we value and what our relationship is to the source of that value. In this way, identity requires goods and significant relationships to the source of those goods. Are we images of God heading to the Kingdom? Are we self-legislating reasoners alone in a chaotic universe? Our self-conceptions and our stance to the world matter. They orient us and tell us what is possible and what the best we can do is.

Though hypergoods are constituent of our identity, move us and demand our respect, this does not mean we cannot reflect on them. Culture and, in particular, our language allows for a reflective distance that forms our self-interpretations. The background understanding of language

¹⁰ TAYLOR, *Sources*, 59.

¹¹ Ruth ABBEY, “Introduction: Timely Meditations in an Untimely Mode – The Thought of Charles Taylor,” in *Charles Taylor*, ed. Ruth Abbey, (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 24.

and culture allows us to interpret the goods we desire as well. We not only understand hypergoods, we can articulate an explanation of them and even give reasons for them. We also have no recourse to reasons outside of ourselves to care about one thing over another. A central argument Taylor makes within *Malaise* is that we must appeal to some shared horizon of significance to account for our goods and get others onboard with our plans to see them through. Choice does not confer worth on things. The appeal of goods is not solely located in the individual. The appeal is something we respond to in the face of the goods themselves.

1.3. Reasoning about Goods: Reasoning in Transition and by Comparison

Taylor questions the emphasis placed on certain conceptions of reason in moral philosophy. In particular, Taylor challenges the value of Descartes' disengaged reason that is taken up by Enlightenment philosophers such as Locke and Kant. For Descartes, in order to gain clear and distinct ideas about reality we must take the stance of reason outside of our ordinary experiences and beliefs.¹² It is only if these ideas are clearly and distinctly built that we can judge with certainty that they are correct. This is what Descartes thinks the mind does when engaged in the natural sciences. From the standpoint of disengaged reason, his moral philosophy unfolds as a procedure of self-determining reason. According to Taylor, this disengagement "does violence to our ordinary, embodied way of experiencing."¹³ Though Descartes is working from the current of the inward turn in Western Augustinian thought, the stance is divorced from most of life's experiences. We are tasked to treat ourselves as objects but from a first person perspective.¹⁴

The third position of the BA principle challenges the emphasis on disengaged reason in moral reflection. For Taylor, an account of practical reason must include reasoning in transitions

¹² TAYLOR, *Sources*, 143-158.

¹³ TAYLOR, *Sources*, 146.

¹⁴ TAYLOR, *Sources*, 176.

as well as reasoning by comparing goods.¹⁵ Regarding comparing goods, Taylor's conception of moral reasoning is quite affected by the context of "everyday living" where one does not tend to reason as philosophers say humans do. In the everyday context, practical reasoning appears to be used circumstantially and usually, after the action has occurred. Conflict is the usual circumstance where practical reason is deployed. We are challenged to articulate the good we want to achieve. Even if our dialogue partners are patient and willing to hear us, we may struggle to fully articulate just what we find good about what we are doing. This is because the goods that orient us are implicit in our understanding and we are not fully aware of just why something should be done and in what way. Practical reasoning allows us to articulate goods and how to achieve them. Even still, these judgments are comparative rather than absolute. We compare among alternative means and goods to be done. One might even go so far as to provide rational justification that seeks to convince universally for his or her actions. This is rare and yet, these cases are what Enlightenment philosophers talk about the most, making them the rule rather than the exception.

For Taylor, we can also reason practically in transitions about historical change. This involves reasoning about where we are and what we are by comparing transition points in history. We can ask ourselves, "why is moral vision 'x' appealing to these people and is it more coherent and appealing than previous moral vision 'y'?" This reasoning in transition is what animates Taylor's method of interpretive history. Rather than provide a more explanatory historical account, *Sources of the Self* is the historical unfolding of how the moderns made the transition to a new moral vision constituted by how we view ourselves and our relationship to the

¹⁵ Terry PINKARD, "Taylor and the History of Philosophy," in *Charles Taylor*, ed. Ruth Abbey, (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 198.

good. Why did modernity turn to disengaged reason as the gateway to morality and promote the Lockean punctual self that wields reason for control over nature?

1.4. The Emphasis on Disengaged Reason in Accounts of Moral Reflection

According to Taylor, the ideal of disengaged reason for moral reflection and the notion of the punctual self are answers to questions related to how we make the transition to living in the new world of science.¹⁶ Before Galileo, the cosmos provides a scheme of hierarchical ordering directed toward God and in which human beings take part to achieve the highest goods. After Galileo, the cosmic order is disenchanted by viewing it as mechanistic and subject to laws discovered by reason. To understand the order of the cosmos, one must be rational rather than simply a believer in the story told by the Christian religion. Pre-Galilean conceptions of reason saw it as a tool for discovering the order of the universe as intelligible and good. In the wake of the new science and Descartes' philosophical thought, "rationality is no longer defined substantively, in terms of the order of being, but rather procedurally, in terms of the standards by which we construct orders in science and life."¹⁷ The cosmos is understood mechanistically as a place where things react functionally toward other things. Reason works out these mechanisms and functions using clear and distinct ideas. We can gain control over these processes by understanding them and manipulating their functions. In this way, the cosmos is disenchanted as a source of ends or goods that can be discovered and grasped by reason.¹⁸ Instead, reason proceeds methodically toward mastery and control of the cosmos. Moral theory holds up rationality as the "the power to objectify body, world, and passion."¹⁹

¹⁶ TAYLOR, *Sources*, 143-158.

¹⁷ TAYLOR, *Sources*, 156.

¹⁸ TAYLOR, *Sources*, 149.

¹⁹ TAYLOR, *Sources*, 151.

For Enlightenment thinkers, such as Descartes, Locke and Kant, morality is based in the reasoning capacities of the human being to control and legislate oneself. The force of hypergoods is ignored in favour of rational and procedural self-control. In this way, there arises a gap between what is rationally normative and our strongest motivating desires for the good in life. If we can disengage from ourselves, we can become subject to these moral laws like physical objects are subject to laws of the natural sciences. Yet, unlike objects of the universe, we are self-legislating. As Kant would assert, we are free to legislate ourselves according to reason. We are separated from that which makes a claim on us in ordinary living unless we can judge it as clearly and distinctly good according to reason in a disengaged mode.

1.5. Summation

Ultimately, from the side of the Enlightenment stream of ethical thinking, the current state of ethical theory promotes a withdrawal from “ordinary” forms of responsible engagement. This is due in large part to the promotion of disengaged reason as that which holds the key to moral living. Ironically, because of the standard set out by disengaged reason, we could not ever reason enough in ordinary moral experience. That is, we most often do not tend to reason in a disengaged way about our values, moral desires or what actually moves us to act in ordinary living. Ethical theory seems to separate us from “ordinary ethical reflection” about goods in our ordinary living. Moreover, there is now a large gulf between what goods matter most to human beings in modernity and what ethical theory tends to offer. Theory tends to offer a disengaged view of the self, objectified as though part of the same order of objects studied within the natural sciences. For Taylor, ethical theory ought to take seriously the moral experience of persons and to offer the best account of such experiences within philosophical accounts of ethical reflection. This requires some commitment to establishing basic positions of moral experience within theory

including accounts of strongly valued goods and moral ideals. Without goods and ideals ethical reflection would not occur as we understand it in ordinary living.

2. History of an Inarticulate Debate: The Ideal of Authenticity in Ethical Theory

In the *Malaise of Modernity*, Taylor asserts the necessity of a shared notion of a moral ideal of authenticity for rational and responsible reflection in contemporary Western culture. The ideal of being true to oneself operates like a collective hypergood insofar as it motivates action and allows for reasoning about choices of action via comparison of past and present achievements in light of one's pursuit of being authentic. However, not everyone in the culture or in the field of ethical theory is convinced of the necessity or legitimacy of the ideal of authenticity.

For Taylor, one can discern in current Western philosophical thought on ethics a struggle over the legitimization and the features of the ideal of authenticity.²⁰ However unarticulated, this is the debate for the modern West's culture-wide moral ideal. There are "boosters" who are too positive about the prospects of living out the ideal in a responsible way and there are "knockers" who do not think it possible at all.²¹ The knockers do not consider it a responsible moral ideal because it appears to promote self-centredness and narcissism. For Taylor, the ideal of authenticity is the best account we have available for our self-understanding as moral agents, but we need to be critical of it. On the one hand, the boosters need to consider its challenges that include a tendency of self-centredness. On the other hand, the knockers need to consider its possibilities for advancing the cause of responsible reflection and agency. Taylor identifies

²⁰ Charles TAYLOR, *The Malaise of Modernity*, (Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2003), 23.

²¹ TAYLOR, *Malaise*, 11, 22, 79-80.

himself as neither a booster nor a knocker. His more central position is to advance the articulation of the ideal of authenticity and its requirements.

Taylor argues the case that the ideal of authenticity needs ethical theory's attention to discern its features and requirements. Concretely, what this requires of ethical theory is to distinguish its lower and higher variants. Thus, in the following section, we will explore first Taylor's accounts of the higher and lower forms of authenticity and his historical account of the development of this ideal in Western philosophical tradition. For Taylor, the lower forms are supported by and promote subjectivism. Such support for the lower variants of authenticity in ethical theory can be traced back to the modern era. As we will note, both Enlightenment and Romantic thinkers have a share in contributing to a vision of moral agency as self-centred and based in preference. But, as Taylor argues, to fulfill the ideal of authenticity requires openness to horizons of significance beyond the self and dialoguing with others about our identities and values. The goal of this section is to establish insights from Taylor regarding the nature of ethical abnegation. We will note that endeavouring to fulfill the ideal of authenticity can promote either ethical abnegation or serious ethical reflection depending on whether it is held in its lower or higher forms.

2.1. Higher and Lower Forms of Authenticity

One of the main arguments of Taylor's *Malaise* is that contemporary culture must realize that it is caught in a struggle between lower and higher forms of its motivating moral ideal, namely, the ideal of authenticity.²² Authenticity is being true to oneself and deciding for yourself what the shape of your life is and will be. For Taylor, at its best, the ideal of authenticity would promote self-responsibility, greater connectedness with sources of meaning outside of the self

²² TAYLOR, *Malaise*, 55.

and more participation in communal projects that benefit society as a whole.²³ Yet, bringing the ideal of authenticity into the foreground and defending it as a valid ideal involves steering it away from more self-centred variations of it supported by moral subjectivism.

According to Taylor, moral subjectivism is the view that moral positions are really grounded in preference.²⁴ We do not adopt moral positions because we have reasons for them or because these positions are grounded in our nature. Moral positions are adopted because something in us desires and prefers some positions over others. Subjectivism views the sources of moral demands on us as properly and strictly emanating from the self. This view feeds into an individualism that promotes self-fulfilment above all other values. This form of individualism lends itself to a centring on the self and a concomitant unawareness or refusal of matters that transcend the self. This makes engaging in moral reflection and debate seemingly pointless because all moral demands on the self are really up to the individual to decide. If authenticity is only about being true to one's preferences, there is no need for serious moral reflection about one's values and courses of action.

To raise up the ideal of authenticity from its subjectivist forms involves distinguishing its key characteristics and then being faithful to all of them.²⁵ Taylor traces two strands of the characteristics of authenticity. Strand A supports a view of the self as creator, constructor and discoverer of the shape of one's life. We discover who we are as well as create and construct a life based on the values we find important. Strand A of authenticity also involves originality. We must become that which is original in us to develop our unique potential to the fullest. To live someone else's life is not living at all. The final element in this first strand of authenticity is that

²³ TAYLOR, *Malaise*, 76-77.

²⁴ TAYLOR, *Malaise*, 18-19.

²⁵ TAYLOR, *Malaise*, 66-67.

frequently, the principles and values we live by are espoused as having to be in opposition to the rules of society. To be original, creative and constructive is taken, at times, to be in opposition to what is considered conventionally moral.

For Taylor, sole emphasis on these characteristics has a tendency to slide into subjectivism and leads to an overly narrow anthropocentrism.²⁶ But this does not need to happen. The other strand of authenticity can be taken up in dialogue with the first. Strand B involves two requirements of authenticity and they are (1) remaining open to horizons of significance and (2) openness to dialogue with others in constructing self-definition. The danger involved in emphasizing strand A over strand B is that authenticity can slip into radical subjectivism, an anthropocentric praise of the self and its powers. Deconstructionist philosophers, such as Foucault and Derrida, emphasize strand A.²⁷ Yet, in exalting the self as the sole originator of value, as the creator of significance without recourse to a higher horizon of significance, these philosophers are shutting out or at least flattening horizons of meaning.²⁸ Moreover, in stressing the rejection of conventional morality and the rules of society, they forget or overlook the fundamentally dialogical character of our human condition, which is the second requirement of strand B. Accepting that identity is formed in dialogue with others necessitates the rejection of the subjectivist idea that identity is created through self-choice and solitary reflection. We are, in fact, bound together, we need each other for the development of healthy identities. In exalting strand A over strand B, one is essentially reinforcing and feeding off of the sense of power and freedom that arises when one understands value as solely self-originating. Authenticity then

²⁶ TAYLOR, *Malaise*, 66-69.

²⁷ TAYLOR, *Malaise*, 60-61.

²⁸ TAYLOR, *Malaise*, 66-69.

slides towards subjectivist individualism that sanctions self-centred modes of thought and action. How did we arrive at such a possibility for this lower variant of authenticity?

2.2. Historical Antecedents to the Lower Forms of Authenticity

For Taylor, we cannot simply step outside of our traditions to some disengaged rational stance to be critical of it. Taylor's approach to the problem of subjectivist stances on value is to treat it as a historical problem in Western culture and to formulate its elements using a Hegelian kind of dialectical analysis. In analysing contemporary challenges, one must first look for particular nodal points in history that have given shape to this problem and then try to discern their orientations and contradictions.²⁹ The point is to understand how we arrived at the contradiction within the tradition itself and to understand how this contradiction might be resolved using resources from the tradition or from other traditions. Hence, he investigates the history of the notion of authenticity to uncover the nature of its development into a motivating moral ideal and to discern how its variants cause contradictions in the Western tradition itself.

Taylor reaches inside the Western tradition to understand the key challenge to the ideal of authenticity, which is its slide to subjectivism, by deciphering its antecedent nodal points in history. The ideal of authenticity has its roots in the thought of Augustine and then undergoes two transpositions later in history in the Romantic frameworks of Rousseau and Herder.³⁰ After much searching in the thoughts and frameworks of others, Augustine realised that the key to knowing and doing what is right is found deep within his being. In these self-depths Augustine found God and in reaching this mystery he is turned outward to do good works. The source of genuine moral reflection is God and we are tasked to reach up to God to discern the good. Thus,

²⁹ TAYLOR, *Malaise*, 25-29, 48.

³⁰ TAYLOR, *Malaise*, 25-29.

with Augustine, there is an inward turn to discover God within but to then turn outward to do good works in conformity with God's law.

Augustine's inward turn gets transposed in the thought of Rousseau and Herder. For Rousseau, connecting with one's interior depths was about connecting with the voice of nature within each one of us. This connection with nature allows us to know what is truly right to do. Here the connection between one's inner depths and a source beyond oneself to discern the good is still evident. According to Taylor, Herder's thought reflects a severing of the connection of one's inner-depths with a source beyond oneself for moral reflection. Herder's moral ideal is being true to one's own originality because each person has it in them to be the measure of his or her own existence. Outward conformity to moral standards becomes inauthentic or less true to oneself. In this transposition of the ideal of authentic moral reflection and living, the source for one's reflections can only be the individual self. Thus, with Herder, the task of moral reflection is to connect with oneself to discern the good and not with God or even Rousseau's notion of nature. Thus, the ideal of authenticity undergoes a shift where the moral accent gets displaced from God to nature to the self. We are tasked to connect with our inner-depths to find our original, unique and different way of being.

In the previous section, I referred to Taylor's treatment of Enlightenment ethics where disengaged reason separates us from the everyday moral stream of life. We are alienated from our inner depths and from the outer world, the world of nature, as meaningful. The Romantics attempted to address this alienation by countering disengaged reason with an emphasis on moral sentiments and intuition within the inner depths of all persons.³¹ In early Romantic thought, we are seen as part of the organic wholeness of nature and our wholeness depends on connecting to

³¹ TAYLOR, *Sources*, 368-381.

nature's organic processes. Romantic poets and thinkers emphasized the moral integrity of ordinary people in their rustic lifestyles because they are closer to nature. In this way, romantic thought could be seen as providing a kind of balance to Enlightenment ethics and its emphasis on disengaged reason.

Thus, romantic morality promotes a sense of the self in touch with one's moral intuitions and nature as a whole. Arguably, this is what is severed in the post-Galilean, Enlightenment style ethics. However, the result of this trend could be seen as equally destructive to the moral agent. We have noted Herder's formulation of our moral sources and the demands of moral discernment according to one's own measure. For Taylor, this formulation can easily slide into a subjectivist and thereby, lower form of the ideal of authenticity.³² That is, Herder's position can promote a centring on the self that emphasizes difference over outward conformity, which includes the dictates of conventional morality. There is a "slide to subjectivism"³³ in ignoring the demand for reasoning and articulation about goods beyond one's own measure. Still, there are Enlightenment philosophers' notions that combine with such views about authenticity and promote its subjectivist forms. Taylor points to Descartes' notion of freedom as self-determining and Locke's notion of political individualism that puts the self before social obligations.³⁴

Yet, whether one has Romantic or Enlightenment leanings when it comes to ethical theory and reflection, what has emerged in the wake of the new science and the inward turn is the moral vision that we have it in us to be good. The sources of morality are found within and we ought to attune to that and follow its dictates. We must be true to ourselves. We must be authentic. But, on what can we rely to guide this pursuit besides ourselves? What are our

³² TAYLOR, *Malaise*, 28-29.

³³ TAYLOR, *Malaise*, 55-69.

³⁴ TAYLOR, *Malaise*, 25.

sources? To restore our well of moral sources, we cannot simply go back to a pre-Galilean world order and restore its practices and beliefs. What we can do is get clear on what our ideal is and reason about how we best can live it out.

2.3. Requirements of the Higher Form of Authenticity: Openness to Horizons of Significance and Dialogue with Others

We have noted Taylor's two strands of authenticity and above, we have delved into an analysis of Strand A that involves self-creation and originality in self-construction. Strand B involves us in maintaining (1) openness to horizons of significance beyond the self and (2) openness to dialogue with others in the construction of identity.³⁵ For Taylor, accepting the two requirements of strand B means rejecting subjectivism.³⁶ The idea that our moral sources are within tends to promote originality and creativity over traditional morality, but this cannot lead to shutting out dialogue with others and the dismissal of the heritage that makes sense of oneself. Taylor argues that the emphasis on self-choice and originality in self-definition can undermine the very conditions to fulfill "being oneself." That is, human identity formation is fundamentally dialogical.³⁷ We learn the languages of self-expression from our historical traditions and with others contemporaneously. Significant others recognize in us certain features of our identity and we struggle to live up to or break away from these expectations of our identity. We internalize these significant others and allow them to dialogue with our inner expectations of ourselves throughout our lives. Moreover, some of the most important things in our lives cannot be achieved without others including love and raising children. Without meaningful dialogue with others about our life choices and values, we could not build our identities and lives.

³⁵ TAYLOR, *Malaise*, 66-68.

³⁶ TAYLOR, *Malaise*, 23.

³⁷ TAYLOR, *Malaise*, 45-49.

Given this dialogicality, Taylor argues that the pursuit of authenticity requires fulfilling the conditions of Strand B. These conditions can be formulated as: (1) an awareness of and account for horizons of significance that are beyond self-choice and self-development and (2) dialogue with others in our community about values. The first condition is a horizon of significance that sets the background intelligibility of beliefs, stories and values that allow one to make choices that are actually significant.³⁸ If one begins from choice itself as that which confers worth on things, then the question arises as to why this choice and not another. To reply that one feels this or that way about it does not make it understandable or worthwhile to others. Reasons must be given or else the choice means nothing at all and cannot be defended as a value. These reasons might be right or wrong, weak or strong depending on the shared background of beliefs and standards within a human community. The fact is that choice does not confer worth on things. If choice did confer worth then all choices *a priori* would be right, valuable or good. This is nonsense. What is significant is not something one chooses, but something one discovers and understands within a horizon of shared beliefs, values and standards in a community.

The second condition for Strand B of authenticity involves the need for recognition from others about the value of our decisions. The choices we make within our horizons and the way we live them out require the recognition from others that these choices are in fact more valuable than others.³⁹ Why do we need this recognition for authentic identity formation? To become that which we have in us to be requires a certain kind of social organization that allows us the freedom to become that identity. We need recognition from others that what we want to become is valuable or the conditions for becoming that will be made more difficult or prohibited all

³⁸ TAYLOR, *Malaise*, 31-41.

³⁹ TAYLOR, *Malaise*, 38-41.

together. We need the support of others to become what we are. To deny, for example, that homosexual partnerships are valuable forms of pair-bonding lends support to those various prohibitive conditions that discourage and make it more difficult for homosexual couples to live freely and share in the opportunities that are available to heterosexual couples. Recognition of the value of different ways of forming identity has become part of the liberal horizon. Yet, to champion the rights of homosexual couples based on difference alone, on choice alone, is to subtly frustrate or neutralize the value of homosexual coupling. Mere difference is not valuable. We need to talk about values and find some commonalities to advance the recognition of the value of any element of our identity formation. That is, we cannot give up on reflections and conversations about values and champion difference itself.

One of the greatest challenges to arriving at agreements about public values is the grip of moral relativism. In some philosophical contexts, relativism can be harsh. If the source of value is equated with approval by individuals or cultures, there is no need to understand these values or consider their potential normative thrust. In liberal contexts, relativism is used to promote neutrality and tolerance in diversity and so Taylor calls this “soft-relativism.”⁴⁰ According to this stance, everyone has a right to choose one’s own values and to live according to them. This view is often coupled with self-determining freedom. When combined these stances give rise to the assertion that each value is equally significant because all values are chosen by people and all individuals are equally worthy and free to make decisions about his or her values. One could say that these suppositions support respect for the diversity of values and the viewpoints of others. Unfortunately, this deference to the other can end up devolving into a singular concern for diversity and mere choice. Consequently, no one can argue for or against a value because it is

⁴⁰ TAYLOR, *Malaise*, 31-38.

based in a choice and not in some inherent worthiness. Why is this a problem? A pre-critical and blanketed respect for choice leads to relativizing the diversity of our traditions, beliefs and values. All beliefs and values appear equal. If all are equal then how do we make decisions together about the most important, even life-threatening, issues of our times?

For Taylor, maintaining the higher ideal of authenticity rationally behooves one to reject the subjectivist principle that one can simply choose what is significant and of value.⁴¹ This is because the subjectivist principle contradicts the very worth of the ideal of authenticity. The fact is that what is significant is significant because of how it fits into a larger horizon of meaning. Simply choosing does not confer significance on an object because without a larger horizon of meaning the choice is unintelligible. Moreover, if choices are significant it is because some things are more valuable than others. Grounding moral worth on choice itself frustrates the value of the endeavour to be oneself. Declaring that something has worth because it is a choice instead of providing reasons to others also hampers the process of reaching the social agreement needed to establish what is being valued. We need some rational reflection about values and reasons in our dialogue with others so that we can gain social support for what we consider to be valuable projects of living. Consequently, relying on the individual's free choice as a means of justifying values and decisions hampers the ability to live authentically with others.

Thus, for Taylor, authenticity is a valid moral ideal, but ethical theory ought to struggle to prevent its slide into subjectivist forms that focus too much on the self and its interests. Subjectivist forms frustrate real moral reflection and debate about issues that matter to society because the self is so enmeshed in its limited and impoverished horizons. Yet, Taylor's Strand B requirements of authenticity provides a clue as to how rational argumentation can demonstrate

⁴¹ TAYLOR, *Malaise*, 31-39.

that subjectivist principles are self-defeating and self-stultifying. Without such meaningful and rational dialogue about values and social goods, Taylor posits that participation in projects of civil society do decline. One can experience and understand the social world as Max Weber's "iron cage" where one's choices and values do not matter or make a difference.⁴² In the iron cage, what matters is not value, but rational calculation of achieving practical ends efficiently. Such a world is not conducive to the ideal of authenticity because it hampers the pursuit of reflection on social goods and values. To live up to the high ideal of authenticity requires serious ethical reflection on the values we hold and why.

2.4. Summation

At its height, an ethic of authenticity would accord more responsibility on the part of the individual to reflect on values and to participate in dialogue about society and its trajectory. The choices we make for ourselves require both shared horizons out of which our choices become significant and the recognition of the value of our choices in the minds and hearts of our communities. The ethic of authenticity requires of us that we begin to think deeply about the reasons and the challenges of our choices both for or against certain values, beliefs and modes of being in the world. This entails that we cannot defer reflection on and conversations about value indefinitely. We cannot merely decide that choice itself confers value if we want to change the orientations of our community. We cannot change anyone's mind about the value and rights of individuals and groups if we follow subjectivist principles. The high ideal of authenticity requires that we see the more self-centred modes of philosophical reflection and living as a site of struggle over the moral ideal of Western culture.

⁴² TAYLOR, *Malaise*, 93-108.

Conclusion

Considering Taylor's account of the higher and lower ideal of authenticity, we can make some assertions regarding the nature of ethical abnegation. For Taylor, the lower variants of the ideal of authenticity are in league with subjectivist stances on the sources of ethical reflection and judgment. The lower variants demand little in terms of ethical reflection beyond what the individual subject prefers and wants to enact. However, for Taylor, these stances limit one's ability to actually fulfill the ideal of authenticity. That is, subjectivist stances are untenable in the long-term for agents who seek to discern, reason, and enact valuable projects of living with others. If we want to build up our unique identity, we need to participate in projects of living with others where we are supported in those endeavours. Thus, we need reasons for our value choices and these are gained through larger horizons of meaning beyond the projections of the self. Here, Taylor's critiques of subjectivist positions on the ideal of authenticity resonate with MacIntyre's critique of emotivism as inhospitable for reflecting on valuable projects of living. However, Taylor diverges from MacIntyre's pessimism regarding Western culture's ability for ethical reflection about goods without a radical shift in its social structures.

For Taylor, Western culture is capable of living up to the higher variant of the ideal of authenticity. Taylor's version of the higher variant of authenticity requires not only self-discernment about values and self-creation, it also requires openness to horizons beyond the self and dialogue with other agents about values. The higher ideal of authenticity encourages engagement in serious ethical reflection insofar as it advances and promotes the belief in the very possibility of engaging in rational reflection and dialogue with others about values. For Taylor, this reflection and dialogue can lead to genuine mutual understanding and social change. However, when the ideal of authenticity is taken in its lower, more subjectivist forms, it fosters

ethical abnegation. That is, there is little point in discerning one's values and offering reasons for them if all values are merely reflections of preference. Taylor's suggestion on how to mitigate such causes of ethical abnegation is to promote the high ideal of authenticity. Critique of Taylor's suggestions will be discussed in more detail in chapter four. But, as with our treatment of MacIntyre, the point of our analysis of Taylor is to articulate how current ethical theory fosters a cultural climate that allows for and even encourages the problem of ethical abnegation. According to Taylor's thought, subjectivist principles allow for a turning away or refusal of answering with seriousness one's own ethical questions, "What should I do?" and "Is it right to do?"

If we take MacIntyre's and Taylor's treatments of emotivism and subjectivism together, there emerges a picture of the difficulties facing ethical theory and reflection. We can relate the interminable state of moral debate to our own attitude toward moral reflection and the endeavour to arrive at judgments and decisions about goods and projects of living. What is the point of ethical reflection if our reasoning with others leads to unending disagreement and the reinforcement of preferences? Considering the state of affairs in ethical theory and public debate about moral issues, do we find ourselves wondering about the worth of our ethical reflections? Emotivism and subjectivism answer these questions with tempting ease. They suggest to us that all these reflections, even about the worth of moral reflection, amount to preferences. If ethical reflection is just about preference, the subject does not have to engage in serious ethical reflection to discern them. In this way, emotivism and subjectivism do not existentially challenge the subject to go beyond the familiar. They provide the easy answers to the ethical questions, "what should I do?" and "Is this right to do?" If ethical reflection is about the discernment of preference, there is no need to achieve understanding of the standards of excellence or a rational

account of one's values or actions. In other words, emotivism and subjectivism promote ethical abnegation by providing a seemingly theoretical justification for remaining content to only discern one's preferences in ethical reflection. There is no need to develop, argue, change one's preference if that is all there is to genuine ethical reflection. An emotivist or subjectivist subject would be content to remain as she is. It is a kind of entrapment in one's current state of feelings and preferences. Moreover, without the possibility for reasons for moral judgments and decisions, the social context becomes a platform of manipulation of feelings and preferences. Insofar as emotivist and subjectivist positions promote stagnation in growth and manipulation in the social situation, these moral standpoints cannot remain viable options in ethical theory. Given their easy answers to worthwhile though challenging questions, they essentially promote unreflective moral reflection.

However, in the following chapters, we will turn to Lonergan's thought that advances more challenges to ethical reflection. We will refer to Lonergan's notions regarding the biases of common sense and the divergences of concerns of subjectivity that also prevent serious ethical reflection. In other words, self-centred modes of ethical reflection based in individual preferences are only one challenge to serious ethical reflection on the questions "What should I do?" and "Is this right to do?" Besides individual bias as dictated by self-interest, there is also group bias dictated by concerns to ensure the survival and success of the group. There is also the general bias of common sense. The general bias of common sense refers to the mode of meaning and reflection known as common sense in Lonergan's writings. Common sense relates the things of the world to oneself – what one already understands, feels, knows, values, and wills. Theory as a mode of meaning differs from common sense and it seeks to define and relate objects to other objects such that it can set down the actual relationships among things without exclusive

reference to the subject-as-one-is. This is the mode in which ethical theory attempts to engage. However, at some point, the goals of ethical theory ought to include encouraging actual reflection in the subject. For Lonergan, this is done in the mode of interiority where one attends to and can encourage one's own reflections on values and social goods in the context of living. To understand and to encourage reflection's frequency one can engage in analysis of interiority. According to Lonergan, this can be done through a method of self-appropriation. This is a method that neither Taylor nor MacIntyre explore. In the method of self-appropriation, one pays attention to the operations of ethical reflection rather than the objects of reflection. For instance, one pays attention to questioning and preferring itself rather than what the questioning and preferring are pointing to.

Returning to our discussion of the mode of common sense, it seeks to relate new objects and information to the current self, the self-as-one-is with its preferences and biases. It wants to know how the new information can be used practically and mostly for the survival and the good of the current state of things. When this mode becomes the sole means of ethical reflection, especially without interiority, there emerge the problems that result from the general bias of common sense and they include self and group interested judgments and decisions. We will explore this bias and other challenges of subjectivity that lead to ethical abnegation in more detail throughout the following chapters and we will develop arguments for how Lonergan's positions address these challenges.

For now, the point is that the problem of ethical abnegation has more causes than subjectivism and emotivism in ethical theory, which can encourage the narrowing of ethical reflection to individual interest and preference. In the following two chapters, we will discuss other features and causes of ethical abnegation according to Lonergan's ethical framework. As

these other challenges are not central to MacIntyre and Taylor's analyses of current ethical theory, we cannot expect them to address them as such. However, their analyses allow for situating the problem of ethical abnegation in the current state of theoretical frameworks of ethical reflection. If these theoretical frameworks are based in subjectivist and emotivist principles, they promote ethical reflection on preference. The danger of such a climate of ethical reflection can be viewed in the interminable debates on moral issues in culture and the lack of participation in valuable projects of social living in civil society. Interminable debate that simply reinforces one's preference on moral issues and living in an iron cage of efficiency are two of the most detrimental outcomes of emotivist and subjectivist principles for moral agency and valuable engagement in the world. Thus, we ought to take these challenges to ethical reflection seriously in ethical theory. Moreover, ethical theory must begin to identify and address deeper issues at work in ethical abnegation in order to promote climates of reflection on value and social goods.

Chapter 4

Introduction to Lonergan's Framework for Addressing Ethical Abnegation

The following chapter introduces aspects of the work of Lonergan to address the problem of ethical abnegation. We have stated the problem as not taking one's ethical questions seriously and hence, the refusal to allow one's own reflections to augment and critically evaluate choices. In the previous chapter, we noted that MacIntyre and Taylor both argue against streams of ethical theory that place personal preference based in feelings or opinions in the role that ethical reflection based on reasons should take. Mere preference as the basis for reflection promotes ethical abnegation. In the first section, we will outline the need to turn to aspects of Lonergan's work to address the current state of thought on ethical reflection in both theory and ordinary living. Section two offers an introduction to Lonergan's account of the three stages of meaning; namely, common sense, theory and interiority. We will consider the conflicts between stages that result in ethically troubled consciousness. Without a development of interiority, these three stages cannot be understood as distinct yet essential modes deriving from the same human consciousness. The last section provides an account of Lonergan's intentionality analysis of responsible engagement. We will note that it is the subject's responsibility to engage in the operations of responsible consciousness in the concrete situation. By following the dictates of one's own responsible consciousness, we can become authentic knowers and deciders of value. Insofar as this is possible for us, we are pursuing ethical reflection and allowing those reflections to augment and critically evaluate our choices for the good of ourselves and for others.

1. Lonergan's Contributions to the Problem of Ethical Abnegation as Addressed by MacIntyre and Taylor

Taylor and MacIntyre both isolate specific manifestations of mere personal interest masquerading as a philosophically legitimate schema for decision-making. Both present a historically informed dialectical investigation of the deviations of moral theory that have led to the current state of more self-centred modes of moral inquiry. In this way, Taylor and MacIntyre challenge popular conceptions of ethical reflection that assert the futility of engaging in developing one's ethical knowledge, outside of personal preference, toward ascertaining and working towards establishing social goods. In other words, both authors offer diagnoses and responses to the challenge of ethical abnegation: not taking one's own ethical questions seriously and so not allowing genuine reflection to augment and critically evaluate one's choices.

Their philosophical frameworks, however, lack certain resources to fulfill the goals of their proposed correctives to the self-centred modes of moral reflection. This claim derives from Brian J. Braman's study of Taylor and Neil Ormerod's analysis of MacIntyre.¹ Braman and Ormerod argue that the resources to advance the projects of Taylor and MacIntyre are available in Lonergan's thought. Drawing upon Braman and Ormerod, the remainder of this section provides a rationale for the turn to Lonergan's framework to clarify and address the problem of ethical abnegation.

¹ Brian J. BRAMAN. *Meaning and authenticity: Bernard Lonergan and Charles Taylor on the Drama of Authentic Human Existence*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008). Neil ORMEROD. "Faith and Reason: Perspectives from MacIntyre and Lonergan." *The Heythrop Journal* 46 (Number 1, 2005): 11-22. Michael P. MAXWELL also advances a critique of MacIntyre in dialogue with Lonergan's thought. See: Maxwell, "A Dialectical Encounter Between MacIntyre and Lonergan on the Thomistic Understanding of Rationality." *International Philosophical Quarterly*, Volume 33 (Number 4, 1993): 385-399.

1.1.Addressing Ethical Abnegation: Taylor

Taylor suggests that individuals ought to orient themselves toward achieving the higher form of the ideal of authenticity. To do this one must engage in meaningful social projects directed toward agreed upon goals. Thus, one must remain open to dialogue with others to resolve value conflicts situated in contexts where individuals are informed by diverse traditions and their interpretations. These suggested correctives, however, are not complemented by a theory of the human person or a framework for how understanding and judgment operates in dialogue. Since Taylor does not have a fully developed theory of the human person, his justification of why one would choose the higher ideal of authenticity is limited. Moreover, it remains ambiguous how dialoguing with others implies arriving at agreement on the content of values.

Still, Taylor argues for the place of ethical reflection as reasoning out our authentic goods and what they demand of us. This is in opposition to an ethical reasoning toward rules or norms. What counts as normative force for Taylor takes on a different meaning than one usually associates with norms. Normative force is conceived as either “rule following”² or hypergoods, which make claims on us to pursue action. Terry Pinkard points out that Taylor’s notion of “rule following” is influenced by Wittgenstein’s assessment that “there is a way of grasping a rule which is not an interpretation, but which is expressed in what we call ‘obeying the rule’ or ‘going against it’ in actual cases.”³ Rules of acting in ordinary contexts are not mentally formed or represented prior to our acting them out. However, to obey a rule is not to follow it blindly because there is a background understanding from which we derive whether we are breaking a

² PINKARD, “Taylor and the History of Philosophy,” 193.

³ PINKARD, “Taylor and the History of Philosophy,” 193-194.

rule (or if we should). The background understanding is constituted by practices. For Taylor, practices are “any stable configuration of shared activity, whose shape is defined by a certain pattern of dos and don’ts.”⁴ We are participants in practices at all levels of society from the family to larger governmental institutions. Practices can be articulated into ideas expressing patterns of rules with some kind of a rationale. Still, these patterns are first participated in before their rationales are articulated. In this way, “ordinary practice” is often pre-reflective and yet, contains normative force for the agent.

Taylor’s notions about practical reasoning are based on the way we think and act within the context of practices. For Taylor, along with language and culture, practices make up the background understanding for interpreting and engaging our worlds.⁵ There is nothing we encounter that is not mediated by a nexus of background meanings. In our ordinary living, we act out rules rather than reasoning toward them. Similarly, we act on goods without reasoning toward them. From the stance of a disengaged reason, norms are said to have authority if they have reasons that can be articulated especially in a way that can be defended universally. Norms require objective reasons. To objectify reasons for action in this way is to disconnect human beings from the ordinary stream of life while discounting the goods that motivate action.

However, norms are not what make an agent. For Taylor, what are essential to agency are not reasons for actions, but hypergoods to be achieved.⁶ This is not to say reason does not enter the picture. For something to be a good for us, we must have reasons to achieve and to act for them. The point is that without our orientation to goods and hypergoods, practical reasoning in ordinary living would not make sense. There is no reason to question the rules of a practice or

⁴ TAYLOR, *Sources*, 204.

⁵ ABBEY, “Introduction: Timely Meditations in an Untimely Mode – The Thought of Charles Taylor,” 24-25.

⁶ TAYLOR, *Sources*, 59-64.

the relative merits of an action without some kind of orientation to a higher good than the norm of a practice. In everyday practice, engaged agency requires following rules and being oriented to goods.

Taylor is not saying that reasons ought never to enter the picture of moral living. The essential objection is to discover the reasons for the norms that already make their force known to us in ordinary living. This is how we can reconnect ordinary living with reasoning more or less philosophically. Yet, Taylor's theory does not contain the means to move back and forth, from philosophical thinking to ordinary living, and back to philosophical thinking and so on. The advantages of Lonergan's thought is that it is rooted in an analysis of the interiority that is operative in both ordinary living (common sense meaning) and moral theory (theoretical meaning). This analysis is developed from the perspective of a third stage, distinguished as interiority, which is the stage of philosophical meaning proper. Differentiating between the stages allows one to navigate between them in terms of their proper methods, languages, and standards.

1.2. Addressing Ethical Abnegation: MacIntyre

Unlike Taylor, MacIntyre develops a framework for how moral theory leads to agreement about values within ordinary living among groups. But, to make the theory fit ordinary living, we seemingly have to go back in time to when social organization was conducive to Aristotelian virtue ethics. MacIntyre's account does not elaborate on the shifts in social organization from the societies that practiced the virtues to our current social organizations. What is stated is that these organizations have been lost, but it is by reinstalling such organizations that Western culture will be provided the means to arrive at an alternative to emotivism. Without such social organizations, how can we offer a comprehensible schema for agreement on moral decisions? It

is unclear how the subject makes the transition to Aristotelian reflection on virtue ethics if one does not have access to practices that promote the virtues.

Still, MacIntyre's conception of "practice" sets the foundations for a defensible account of moral reasoning between individuals. Maintaining shared standards and goals for a practice conditions the possibility of sharing rational justification for moral judgments. One of the difficulties with this line of argumentation is the narrowness of the context for what allows for shared rational moral justification. According to MacIntyre, a practice is:

any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended.⁷

What is narrow about this conception of practice is that some cooperative human activities have not been established long enough to have "standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity."⁸ Arguably, these standards can be developed. But, this conception of practice does not allow for the possibility of developing practices or for participants who do not realize that they are part of a practice. What about the critique of practices in terms of their long-term effects? MacIntyre's account of practice appears self-enclosed.

After Virtue seems to suggest that coherent morality cannot work without returning to social organization like that of ancient Athens or the monastery of Saint Benedict.⁹ This is what garners the charge that MacIntyre is a classicist. A classicist asserts that a particular culture in one stage in history is the pinnacle of social organization and reflection. One can be either a

⁷ MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 187.

⁸ MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 186.

⁹ MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 263.

critical or uncritical classicist. An uncritical classicist tends to understand, judge and criticize other cultures from the perspective of their own current culture. The uncritical classicist uses their own categories and standards while excluding the possibility that culture changes over time and develops along with social and economic changes. The charge of uncritical classicism cannot be made against MacIntyre considering his insistence that ethical theory ought to take into account social and historical context. What MacIntyre's critical classicism discounts are the elements of development and decline within particular social and cultural circumstances. That is, there is no point in history that is "all good" or "all bad." For example, there are communities of practitioners at the moment who possess standards of excellence and who make moral judgments that others in that community can uphold as good. The practice of the virtues is possible today. Inversely, there were circumstances in the time of Aristotle and the Middle Ages where practicing the virtues would be made difficult such as in times of war or illness. But, again, this leads us to ask how we are to develop such practices or judge practices as worthwhile or harmful.

Moreover, MacIntyre's Aristotelian frame does not allow adequate recognition of cultural differences. MacIntyre posits that a virtue ethics situated within a practice and its tradition offers a schema to facilitate agreements concerning ends and goals of communities. This framework presupposes a shared understanding of tradition among a group of people. While it is possible that practices across cultures share a formal structure that includes shared goals and working together to promote excellence, this cannot be said of the content of the traditions that inform those practices. In this way, MacIntyre assumes a more static, classicist notion of tradition than is acceptable in a world that is culturally diverse. Furthermore, like Taylor, MacIntyre does not provide a philosophical framework that allows movement back and forth from ordinary living in the current context to moral theory. It leaves the subject with the impression that she has the

difficult task of transforming her social organization to suit the practices of the virtues in order to make this turn to Aristotelian theory ordinary. However, it remains unclear how to establish such practices considering MacIntyre's work.

Lonergan would agree with Taylor that moral decision-making that is truly valuable involves promoting the higher ideal of authenticity. He would also agree with MacIntyre's suggestions that ethical theory ought to offer an account of ethical reflection and decision as grounded in frameworks of traditions, virtues, and practices. Yet Lonergan goes further than Taylor and MacIntyre in explaining what these suggestions require of the subject. In what follows, I address three aspects of Lonergan's work that are helpful in advancing this project and responding to the challenge of ethical abnegation. They are (1) an account of the different stages of meaning in which ethical reflection occurs: common sense, theory and interiority; (2) an account of ethical reflection that is based in interiority as the recurrent normative pattern for making good decisions in everyday life and that can be represented in ethical theory; (3) and lastly, an account of the different patterns of experience and operations of consciousness that allow for movement back and forth between stages of meaning that heightens the capacity for ethical engagement. I will introduce the first two aspects in this chapter and the last aspect will be addressed directly in chapters seven and eight. All three aspects are grounded in Lonergan's account of interiority via an intentionality analysis and are accessible to the subject through the method of self-appropriation.

2. Lonergan's Three Stages of Meaning

MacIntyre and Taylor identify emotivism and subjectivism in ethical theory as major stumbling blocks to ethical investigation on a personal and social level. Both authors provide accounts of the history of philosophy for the sources of these blockages. There emerges a trend

of a bifurcation in theories about ethics. On the one hand, there are theorists who follow modern philosophers such as Kant and Bentham, who support the capacity of reason to work out universal ethical norms. On the other hand, there are those who follow thinkers such as Nietzsche and the emotivists in their rejection of reason's capacity to establish such ethical norms. MacIntyre and Taylor provide arguments for why the latter camp should not hold sway in our culture despite the fact that the former camp has failed to establish universal ethical norms. They both contend that reason and justification for ethical decisions are still possible and should be pursued.

Lonergan's account of the stages of meaning of common sense, theory and interiority can provide another layer to MacIntyre and Taylor's historical accounts of ethical reflection. Lonergan's account of these stages is not directly taken from the history of development of ethical theory. Rather, the account is more general, tracing the development of theory as a distinct stage of meaning apart from common sense with its own kind of language, methods and standards.¹⁰ However, instead of delving into a history of where ethical theory went wrong or right, Lonergan invites his readers to delve into their own interiority.¹¹ The responsibility for ethical engagement is not on the theories of ethics "out there," but rather, it is our responsibility to pursue ethical engagement by adverting to our interior reality. That is, we can pursue the development of our ability for ethical engagement by adverting to how we actually reason, feel, judge and decide to enact what is truly responsible.

Lonergan's method invites us to become acquainted with and understand our interiority. Theorists of ethics must begin to differentiate between interiority and theory as well as articulate

¹⁰ Bernard J. F. LONERGAN, *Method in Theology*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 81-99.

¹¹ See: Bernard J. F. LONERGAN, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, 5th ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 618-656; LONERGAN, *Method*, 27-55.

how they both diverge from common sense ways of doing ethics. Without advertence to interiority, theories are left to contend with unacknowledged tensions and biases stemming from common sense experience and understanding. We will discuss common sense biases in the next chapter. For now, we are discussing the tensions that occur in the subject as a result of the conflicts between the languages, standards, and methods of common sense and theory. We will offer that the stage of interiority allows subjects to reconcile the two stages of meaning as deriving from the same subject operating in two modes of consciousness.

2.1. The First and Second Stages of Meaning: Common Sense and Theory

Lonergan's account of the development of Western culture's three stages of meaning provides a general framework from which we can address a significant tension in the current state of ethical theory. The challenge of performing this assessment is that Lonergan's account of the stages of meaning is not specifically about the history of ethical theory. Rather, it is an account that defines and differentiates three distinct stages of meaning, namely, common sense, theory and interiority. These stages can be conceived as particular modalities of meaning and knowing developed within culture or within an individual. When the standpoints, languages and methods of these stages of meaning conflict it causes a "troubled consciousness"¹² that seeks to terminate the tension without understanding it. This could mean rejecting one stage in favour of the other. I argue that the tension between common sense and theory gives rise to a particular kind of troubled consciousness that affects the current state of ethical theory. Without interiority, ethical troubled consciousness cannot be mitigated.

The development of the stages of meaning within culture can be understood linearly as the emergence of three ideal stages. In a first stage, culture uses only common sense meaning to

¹² LONERGAN, *Method*, 81.

express and to understand. In a second stage, there is theory and common sense. Whereas common sense relates objects to the individual subject, theory relates objects to other objects. The emergence of the distinction between the stages of common sense and theoretical meaning is observed in the Platonic dialogues where Socrates endeavours to define specific virtues. It is in the act of defining that theory emerges. With the success of modern science, theory establishes its foothold in culture, but, philosophy is pushed to the margins. In a third stage, philosophy takes its standpoint from interiority to emerge as a distinct stage of meaning separate from theory and the modern sciences. Interiority relates to our acts of consciousness and their relations in coming to know and in deciding on value. It is adverted to by the methodologist and those who want to be authentic to the demands of human knowing and valuing.

Tensions between stages can cause rejection of one in favour of the other. Without differentiation between the stages, divergences in their standpoints, concerns, languages and methods can cause troubled consciousness. At their most basic level, common sense and theory are rooted within the subject. The tension between these stages can be traced back to two different orienting concerns within subjectivity.¹³ Whereas common sense intelligence is oriented by practical concerns or getting things done, theoretical understanding is typically undertaken out of intellectual concern or the pure unrestricted desire to know. This does not mean that those engaged in theory have no practical desire to do something with his or her discoveries. It also does not mean that common sense is always devoid of intellectual desire. Rather, we are referring to the typical concern for each stage of understanding. Typically, in the common sense stage the concern of practicality blends with intellectual pursuit toward meeting the needs of experience as they arise. Hence, the meaning of “pure” in the pure unrestricted

¹³ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 209-210; 232-233.

desire to know refers to the intellectual concern as operative without interference from other concerns. Common sense intelligence is practically concerned to get things done and this concern is an interference with the unrestricted desire for the truth.

The different kinds of language used to express common sense and theoretical judgments can also be at odds.¹⁴ Common sense uses ordinary language while theory uses technical language. Theory strives for exact definition of terms so that meaning is univocal. The technicality of theoretical language allows for precise determination of relationship. For example, in the language of science, temperature refers to how fast the molecules of an object are moving. Heat refers to the quantity of the heated molecules. Thus, a boiling cup of tea has a higher temperature than a bathtub full of water, but, there is more heat in the bathtub. Unlike theoretical language, common sense language does not strive for precision in its meaning.

Common sense cares more about communication for the purposes of getting things done or expressing what the subject needs to express at the moment. With reference to the distinction between heat and temperature, a person operating within the common sense stage would most likely ask, “Why does that matter?” Really, they are asking, “How does that help me do anything?” Here common sense is being practical. This does not mean common sense is stupid. It can learn the consequences of the difference between heat and temperature without adverting to either definition. For example, one can quickly discover that she cannot use an ice cube to cool a bathtub’s temperature down enough to take a bath, but, she can use that same ice cube to cool the temperature of a cup of tea enough to drink. Common sense may not be able to explain precisely why this is the case, but, it knows the practical difference in terms of concrete solutions in living.

¹⁴ LONERGAN, *Method*, 81-99.

We can also compare the general way that common sense and theoretical meaning unfold toward different standards of generalized knowledge. In the theoretical stage of meaning, the standard for generalization of its knowledge is a law with universal validity. That is, the law will apply in all circumstances. This requires analysis of data such that one abstracts the relationships among things within the data that remain uniform and consistent. Theory is not content to describe such relationships but to explain them. Technical vocabulary assists the process of relating things to one another. As we get more precise in our categories, we can make ever further precisions to explain the relationships among things. The specialized vocabulary and body of knowledge of theory is dispersed among even more specialized fields of study. To participate in these fields is to learn its vocabulary, its laws and its special methods of investigation. A key difference between theory and common sense is that theory requires method to engage in investigation of the unfamiliar and unimaginable. Common sense settles on verifying its insights according to how things appear to the subject. Without method, the theoretician can falter in the process of verification by relying on what things seem like to her rather than what can be verified by conditions established by the method.

In the common sense stage of meaning, we do not need a special method beyond trial and error because we remain in the world of the familiar.¹⁵ One uses descriptions to relate what is familiar to ourselves and to others without the use of technical vocabulary. What we come to understand is related in proverbs. That is, we create proverbial “sound bites” for ourselves and others that can be used to express what we have come to know. For example, “Look before you leap” or “Two wrongs don’t make a right.” There is no demand for universal validity in these expressions. These generalizations are passed down generationally and the ones that remain in

¹⁵ William R. MORIARTY, “*Stare Decisis Sed Concreta* – Precedent and Lonergan’s Common Sense,” *Catholic Law* 27 (1981-1982): 326-339.

use are those which have survived common sense's standard of verification; i.e., is the generalization workable in immediate and practical ways? If this is the case more often than not, it survives as a part in the common fund of practically tested proverbial answers. Thus, there is a common fund from which each member of the community can draw. This fund is not a specialized body of knowledge open only to the few. The generalizations of the common fund remain in use despite the many exceptions to their applications in concrete circumstance. Common sense accepts that circumstance dictates application of generalization and that additional insights are needed. This is a key difference between common sense and theoretical standards for knowledge goals. Common sense accepts that circumstance dictates application of generalization. In theory, the circumstance cannot change the application of the universal law. If it did, then the law is no longer universal.

Troubled consciousness is the tension experienced when one cannot reconcile the differences between common sense and theory.¹⁶ This tension often arises as a result of theoretical conclusions challenging common sense perceptions and judgments. For example, common sense tells us that the table I am writing on is solid and of one piece. A scientific explanation of the molecular composition of the table would challenge this judgment. The table is made up of billions of molecules that are interacting with each other but separated by imperceptible spaces. From the standpoint of theory, it could be said that the table's solidity is an illusion. In fact, from a scientific standpoint, solidity of the perceivable universe is a rare exception. Does this mean we should do away with the common sense description of an object's solidity? A quick response is that we live as though things are solid and of one piece, from tables

¹⁶ LONERGAN, *Method*, 81.

to buildings, from forests to oceans, from insects to persons. We could not function without this common sense apprehension of solidity.

There are many theoretical explanations that challenge common sense apprehensions, but, taken together the challenges result in a tension. One can react to the tension by rejecting either theory or common sense. Common sense apprehensions cannot be completely rejected without serious consequences to our everyday functioning. What makes common sense “common” is its ubiquity. As a mode of understanding, it is the human community’s default position. Theory, however, develops slowly in culture and in the person. A simple contrast of standpoint serves to indicate why this is the case. Common sense begins from the standpoint of how objects are related to us. Theory’s standpoint is how the objects are related to themselves. To reject common sense would mean not understanding the world in relation to oneself. It is impossible. In contrast to the rejection of common sense, ignoring theory and its explanation of the world is possible and even easy.

Outright rejection of theory stemming from mathematics and the natural sciences is difficult considering their success in the concrete forms of technology, of the university and of business and media. Whereas scientific theory produces institutions and technology people can point at or actually use practically, there is not the same productive “concreteness” for ethical theory. Though consciousness may be troubled by the utter unfamiliarity of scientific and mathematical assertions, at least there are visible institutions and technologies that result from science and mathematics. Even if one does not understand the meaning of everything or of anything at all in the field of chemistry, one can know it serves a purpose in the formation of pharmaceuticals. One believes in the fact of its status as a viable field of study. This is not the case for ethics. People might believe in particular individuals manifesting goodness. But, these

ethical individuals are rarely perceived as expressions of sound ethical theory. Businesses promote ethical practices in their products touting “fair trade” or “organic” on their labels. But, this is not the standard. Individuals can choose to spend their money on whatever products they like or can afford. If there is “ethical technology” I am not aware of it.

Moreover, there is a particularly acute tension between common sense and theoretical ethical reflection due to the challenge of application of theoretical principles to ordinary living. The difficulty is that ethical theory is expected to offer universal laws that allow us to be ethical in ordinary living which is full of contingent circumstance. However, application of universal laws for living cannot work without the addition of insights into the concrete situation. This is what common sense does naturally with its common fund of generalizations. We then expect that ethical theory will automatically work without the additional insights needed to apply the universal rule to the familiar and ordinary. When it comes to applying theoretical principles in the concrete, circumstance does matter. If one takes the Kantian principle of the categorical imperative, she may derive universal dictates for living. For example, she may come up with the maxim “One should never tell a lie.” If we all told lies, then the social order would likely break down. Trust in others would erode. However, there are circumstances when telling lies can save lives such as when a person hides potential murder victims. In this way, the duty to not lie conflicts with the duty to not cause injury or to not kill another.

Applying general principles of ethics to the concrete situation will always require some further insights into the situation to ascertain if and how the principle applies. Human organization and collaboration is not uniform in the same way that the physical universe is. We cannot expect that principles can be applied in uniform ways such that we do not have to think about the concrete situation. In this way, the application of ethical theory as a guide for ordinary

living will resemble the process of common sense knowing. We will take the general rule derived from an ethical theory and apply it to the circumstance. Does this mean that we should just remain in the common sense stage of meaning to do all of our ethical reflection? For Lonergan, the answer is no.

2.2. The Third Stage of Meaning: Interiority

From the standpoint of interiority, we need not conceive of ethical theory as only a means to derive generalizations for common sense living. Certainly, we can withdraw from common sense living to ethical theorizing to gain insights and knowledge and then apply what we have learned to the concrete situation. We can use theory to enhance ordinary living. The same subject does the theorizing and the common sense application.¹⁷ Still, the subject need not remain in the common sense stage of meaning to apply ethical theory's principles or common sense's generalizations. We can also operate in the interiority stage of meaning to do our ethical reflection in the concrete. Ethical reflection done in the stage of interiority would entail a turn toward our own operations of consciousness in acts of knowing and deciding about how to apply what we know to the concrete situation.¹⁸

In interiority, one is paying attention to the operations of consciousness rather than the objects or contents of one's consciousness. Thus, for example, from the standpoint of interiority one pays attention to the acts of questioning rather than what she is questioning. One of the reasons a person would do this is to make sure she is questioning properly. That is, she is trying to follow the dictates or method of her own mind. Thus, one can ask, "Have I asked enough

¹⁷ LONERGAN, *Method*, 84.

¹⁸ For Lonergan's ethical theory based in interiority see: LONERGAN, *Method*, 27-55; LONERGAN, *Insight*, 618-656.

questions? Have I satisfied my questions with answers that actually make sense?” Questions of this nature allow one to get to know herself as a knower as well as a decider about value.

Genuine reconciliation of common sense and theory requires that we move out of both stages and into the third, interiority. The turn to interiority involves a heightening of awareness of differing acts and modalities of consciousness. The objects of reference in interiority are the immanent, recurrent and normative operations of consciousness that serve as the intrinsic method of human knowing. The turn to interiority forms the basis of Lonergan’s “transcendental method”¹⁹ in *Method in Theology*. If you do not follow the method or do not follow it well, you will not get progressive and cumulative results even in the natural sciences. For Lonergan, natural science has succeeded because its methods conform to the immanent method of conscious intentionality.

Development in knowledge of one’s interiority allows one to turn to the differentiations necessary to develop an understanding of the distinctions among the two stages of theory and common sense. We can become aware of the fact that the stages are fundamentally rooted in the human being. In other words, the two stages are not so separate as to be incompatible in the same person. From the standpoint of interiority, one withdraws into ethical theory, gains insights and knowledge to be applied when possible and appropriate on the return to common sense living. It is the same subject. The subject as authentic to her responsible questioning addresses the concrete situation in her decisions about what to do and is capable of calling upon resources of common sense or ethical theory. Still, the subject’s responsible interiority must be engaged if she is to pursue value in concrete practice.

¹⁹ LONERGAN, *Method*, 5.

3. Moral Engagement in the Third Stage of Meaning

For Lonergan, following the dictates of one's interior operations of knowing allows for authentic subjectivity. He states, "Genuine objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity."²⁰ In the measure that one is authentic to her operations of knowing, she will be attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible. In this section, we will address the operations of responsible consciousness and what it means to follow through on its dictates. We will observe that genuine objectivity in ethical reflection entails a movement toward authentic subjectivity rather than a facile subjectivism. Drawing from Lonergan's *Insight and Method in Theology* as well as Patrick Byrne's work on Lonergan's ethics,²¹ I will outline elements of responsible consciousness involved in acts of authentic ethical engagement. We will begin with a distinction between categories and the transcendental notions. This will aid in understanding how theory and interiority are distinct as well as introduce the essential function of the transcendental notions in interiority. Before delving into the operations that form the level of responsible consciousness, we will introduce other levels of consciousness and the notions of intellectual and religious conversion. Lonergan's account of the structure of the human good will provide context for the deliberations of responsible consciousness. With this section, I intend to introduce many of the aspects of Lonergan's ethical thought that I will return to in later chapters. The essential point for this chapter is to provide an account of ethical engagement from the standpoint of interiority.

3.1. Moral Interiority: The Operations of Responsible Consciousness

Lonergan's distinction between what is meant by categories versus transcendental notions aids in the differentiation between theory and interiority. Categories are terms that relate to

²⁰ LONERGAN, *Method*, 292.

²¹ Patrick H. BYRNE, "Analogical Knowledge of God and the Value of Moral Endeavor." *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 11/2 (1993): 103-135.

definitions set-up within a culture. Categorical advance happens within both common sense and theory. Unlike theory, common sense does not endeavour to create unified and fixed meaning. In the theoretical stage of the natural sciences, for example, categories are created and defined and refined for the purposes of uniformity of understanding and judgment. Collaboration across cultures, despite difference in common sense ways of understanding, has been made possible by precision of categories within the theoretical stage. But, what unites human knowing and valuing are not the categories of particular cultures. Rather, the transcendental notions operative in human consciousness allow for unity across cultures. According to Lonergan, the transcendental notions “constitute the very dynamism of our conscious intending, promoting us from mere experiencing to understanding, from mere understanding towards truth and reality, from factual knowledge to responsible action.”²² The transcendental notions are the radical intending toward objects that animates the dynamism of conscious operations.

In the stage of interiority, one is attentive to the operations of consciousness as they unfold toward knowing and valuing. Through the process of objectification of conscious operations one can begin to discern the dynamism of the transcendental notions in conscious intentionality itself. These notions orient our activities toward truth, reality and value or doing the truly good by inspiring us to question and arrive at satisfactory answers. Yet, these answers only reveal further questions. The notions intend the comprehensive whole of truth and goodness and thus, our answers form only a small fraction of the radical intending of the notions. Categorical advance does not necessarily indicate an advance in understanding or decisively following the dictates of one’s interiority. Still, the norms operative in human consciousness are universal. Even if we do not decide to follow these norms consciously, we can promote progress

²² LONERGAN, *Method*, 12.

of precision in categories through the norms of attentiveness, insight, reflection, verification and responsible follow through.

Lonergan's transcendental method is a way to navigate the stage of interiority and to develop knowledge of ourselves as knowers and valuers. To set out on transcendental method one begins by experiencing and objectifying the operations of one's own consciousness. By consciousness is meant the subject as engaged in the operations of the four levels of consciousness.²³ Levels of consciousness can be distinguished by the most prominent operation on that level and they are: experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding.²⁴ On the first level the subject is experiencing and this includes sense experience, images, perception, feeling, speaking and moving. As the data of experience flows through consciousness, there spontaneously arise questions about that data. This inquiry signals the subject's movement to the second level of consciousness, the level of understanding. On this level, the subject is intelligence that seeks to find answers to given questions that might fit the data. Answers given by intelligence are insights. Yet, insights "are a dime a dozen, so critical reasonableness doubts, checks, makes sure."²⁵ Here questions for reflection signal the subject as reasonable. Critical reflection marshals and weighs evidence, doubts and checks in an effort to judge whether or not an insight correctly grasps a unity or relatedness of an object or situation. In affirming or refuting that an insight correctly grasps the object or situation the subject makes a judgment of fact. This leads us to the level of decision that is beyond grasping actualities. At the level of decision, we are considering possibilities to be chosen and realized through responsible action. On this responsible level "we are concerned with ourselves, our own operations, our goals, and so

²³ LONERGAN, *Method*, 8.

²⁴ LONERGAN, *Method*, 14.

²⁵ LONERGAN, *Method*, 13.

deliberate about possible courses of action, evaluate them, decide and carry out our decisions.”²⁶

That is, the subject as responsible seeks to contribute to the reality that is by bringing into existence possible courses of action that are truly worthwhile. Through our actions we not only make and do things but we also make or constitute ourselves.

The four levels and their operations are intimately related to one another and form the basic pattern of operations that are brought into explicit focus by transcendental method. The method can be used to develop interiority and we can decide to operate in accordance with its dictates. This involves attending to and objectifying one’s conscious operations and their relations to each other. The process of objectifying consciousness “is a matter of applying the operations as intentional to the operations as conscious.”²⁷ Concretely, this means experiencing one’s experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding.²⁸ This is followed by understanding the unity, spontaneous relatedness and immanent criteria found within one’s experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding. Judging that one’s insights into the unity, relatedness and criteria of the pattern of operations are true, affirms the reality of this basic pattern. Finally, one proceeds in “deciding to operate in accord with the norms immanent in the spontaneous relatedness of one’s experienced, understood, affirmed experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding.”²⁹ This last step is the technical expression of the decision that initiates the acceptance and the process of moral conversion.

²⁶ LONERGAN, *Method*, 9.

²⁷ LONERGAN, *Method*, 14.

²⁸ LONERGAN, *Method*, 14-15.

²⁹ LONERGAN, *Method*, 15.

3.2. Intellectual, Religious and Moral Conversions

Before introducing moral conversion, I will briefly state the elements and decisions essential to intellectual and religious conversion. Intellectual conversion is preceded by the decision to operate in accordance with the demands of the first three levels of the cognitional operations.³⁰ It involves a decision to operate as though knowledge is a compound of experience, understanding and critical reflection. To know is not simply taking a look. When one is intellectually converted, she endeavours to allow the intellectual concern for understanding to transform her experience to wonder. She allows this wonder to orient her experience and understanding toward asking questions about aspects of the universe. But, most essentially, she knows that insights are a dime a dozen and that the only way to know if that insight is correct is through the process of critical reflection. Intellectual conversion allows one to live out a commitment to satisfying wonder at the universe of being. There is also developed a willingness to enter into new lines of inquiry into the intelligible even if the ends are unimaginable and unknowable at the moment.

Religious conversion involves a decision to accept and return the love of God.³¹ In this way, it is a decision made in partnership with God, but, comes as the result of God's initiative and not our own. Lonergan describes the state of the religiously converted person as a "being-in-love" with God. In chapter six, we will delve into religious conversion as enabling moral conversion's commitment to value. Here, I am introducing the possibility that love for God strengthens the subject's ability to be oriented toward value but also toward the unknown and unimaginable. These are chief characteristics of one's world when oriented by intellectual

³⁰ LONERGAN, *Method*, 238-240.

³¹ LONERGAN, *Method*, 240-242.

conversion especially when one undertakes understanding and evaluation that will lead to transcending one's intellectual horizons. That is, religious conversion also orients the subject toward the coincident end of intellectual conversion and that is the truth about being. It also enhances one's ability to perceive value in all things as created by God and directs one to understand all things as potentially good. We turn now to Lonergan's notions pertaining to moral conversion and the structure of the human good that is ultimately oriented toward value.

Moral conversion requires a decision that amounts to operating in accordance with the basic pattern of responsible consciousness and its pursuit of value.³² Lonergan's theoretical expression of this basic pattern can form the basis for understanding the project of becoming an authentic knower and doer in one's concrete living. This concreteness refers to both the realization of value in act and the cognitional operations that intend value. Value is responded to in feeling, grasped by understanding, deliberated upon, affirmed in judgments and is initiated to its realization through decision. One can become acquainted with these operations of interiority and develop a capacity to advert to them and follow them toward realizing value.

For Lonergan, value refers to one of three meanings of "good." Besides value, there are individual goods and participation in the good of order. Individual or particular goods refer to things that satisfy any need or want. This leads to the second sense of "good" because human beings collaborate in ordered patterns of cooperation that ensure access to individual goods. Participation in the good of order requires understanding our role within these patterns of cooperation and fulfilling our obligations. We consider it good to fulfill our duties to these patterns of cooperation. However, in fulfilling our duties, we are respecting the good of order, but, we are not paying attention to the worthwhileness of the pattern of cooperation itself. When

³² Walter E. CONN, "Bernard Lonergan's Analysis of Conversion," *Angelicum* 53 (1976): 374-378.

we intend value, we are attentive to how the pattern of cooperation is unfolding toward shared goals. We are judging the directionality of the pattern and whether it is ensuring access to goods or possibly leading to detrimental consequences. In this attention to the good of the pattern itself, we are assessing the trajectory of progress and decline for the good of order.

An act of value is a contribution to or a modification of a pattern of cooperation that intentionally upholds the good of order.³³ Human beings are involved in multiple patterns of cooperation such as the family unit, institutions of various kinds, local communities and nations.³⁴ A pattern of cooperation functions to provide any number of particular goods. It may do so because these patterns provide the generally acknowledged and necessarily recurrent steps that ensure cooperation among individuals. For example, the grocery stores in which we shop expect our cooperation in exchanging money for goods. Transactions between goods and money are recurrent and must remain so if the grocery store is to gain profits to pay its workers and attain more goods. The ongoing functioning of this scheme is a good in itself and it is dependent on people respecting the order of operations involved in such schemes. In performing actions that knowingly contribute to a pattern of cooperation or that modify it for the better, we are realizing a value. Moreover, if one recognizes a lack of some particular good, one may take the steps to initiate a new pattern of cooperation that contributes to a good of order.

Intelligible patterns of cooperation, which we come to understand, know and affirm are of value, are always components in the wider good of order. For the proper end of a pattern of cooperation is to manifest concretely the good of order.³⁵ A good of order must be distinguished

³³ BYRNE, "Analogical Knowledge of God," 123-124.

³⁴ LONERGAN, *Method*, 47-52; LONERGAN, *Insight*, 619-621.

³⁵ LONERGAN, *Method*, 49.

from particular goods. Although the good of order is not separate from the particular goods it is meant to ensure, it is distinct from particular goods. For the good of order “regards them [particular goods], however, not singly and as related to the individual they satisfy, but all together and as recurrent.”³⁶ In this way, health care is a particular good for me, but health care for everyone is one pattern of cooperation that contributes to the good of order. It orders the operations of individuals toward cooperation to ensure the recurrence of particular goods and directs individual desires and decisions toward an interdependent cooperating.³⁷ Through initiating, contributing to or modifying a pattern of cooperation, we are actualizing a value within a particular manifestation of the good of order.

The goal of responsible consciousness is to decide upon a course of action that has been judged according to value; i.e., it will be done to uphold the pattern of cooperation by promoting its progress over-against its decline. For a course of action to fit and contribute value to a situation, the responsible level of consciousness must rely on the levels of experiencing, understanding and judging to engage in judgments of fact and value. We begin with the processes that lead to judgments of fact. The more accurate the knowledge of the situation, the better suited is the plan for the course of action and the more likely it will contribute value to the situation. Knowledge of the situation begins with the sense experience of the immediate situation that gives rise to the questions for understanding the situation.³⁸ As one asks these questions of the situation, there may arise a host of cognitional contents such as images, feelings and memories of past actions. This stream of cognitional contents also can include previous sense experiences, insights, and judgments of fact and of value. From these various contents, the

³⁶ LONERGAN, *Method*, 49.

³⁷ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 239.

³⁸ BYRNE, “Analogical Knowledge of God,” 112.

subject has one or more insights into the situation. These insights grasp a unity or relatedness within the data of sense and consciousness. Upon arriving at an insight into a situation, a subject may ask questions about the correctness of the insight such as, “Is it so?”³⁹ These questions are for critical reflection and through them one comes to affirm that the insight into a unity or relatedness actually corresponds to the situation. The affirmation or refutation of the correctness of an insight is a judgment of fact. For Lonergan, a judgment of fact rests on critical reflection grasping a virtually unconditioned.⁴⁰ This means that a judgment of fact is conditioned on having sufficient reason to affirm or deny an insight. One will have sufficient reason to affirm the correctness of an insight if there are no further questions that will modify or correct the insight. If there are no further questions, and not just that there are “no further questions *for me*,” then the insight is correct.⁴¹

3.3. *Process of Deliberation: Judgments of Value and Decisions*

Before offering an account of the process of deliberation leading to judgments of value, we will note an important difference between its outcome and the outcome of the process of reflection leading to judgments of fact. Unlike the process of reflection in judgments of fact, the process of deliberation does not end with a judgment. Instead, deliberation finds its term in decision.⁴² The decision signals the end of deliberative reflection and the beginning of a realization of a possible course of action. Decision not only brings into existence or alters something external to the subject, it also alters the subject’s constitution. People are more often aware of the changes in the external reality that result from actions such as having enough food

³⁹ BYRNE, “Analogical Knowledge of God,” 112-114.

⁴⁰ BYRNE, “Analogical Knowledge of God,” 114. For Lonergan’s discussion on other conditioned judgments see, LONERGAN, *Insight*, 306-357.

⁴¹ BYRNE, “Analogical Knowledge of God,” 119.

⁴² BYRNE, “Analogical Knowledge of God,” 116-117; LONERGAN, *Insight*, 636-637.

in the pantry, maintaining communication within a family or respectful work relationships.⁴³

Awareness of the fact that decisions also give rise to what we will become is most often associated with deliberation over actions that will have great influence over the orientation of our lives. For example, deciding to move to a new city, accepting an offer for a new job or getting married are what people normally refer to as existential decisions. These “big” decisions require a lot of reflection and are intensified by feelings of fear, excitement, sorrow or joy. Although these decisions heighten the awareness of the self-making character of action, all decisions bear a self-constituting element.

All decisions arise from some more or less accurate grasp of a situation. From some measure of knowledge of a situation, questions concerning what one will do about it spontaneously arise. These questions signal a movement of the subject into the kind of inquiry that leads to practical insights, deliberation, a judgment of value and a decision. A practical insight is the devising of a possible course of action. According to Lonergan, “As any direct insight, [practical insight] results from inquiry and it emerges upon the sensitive flow, in which it grasps some intelligible unity or correlation.”⁴⁴ This underlying sensitive flow is constituted by such contents as “sensible presentations and imaginative representations, of affective and aggressive feelings, of conscious bodily movements.”⁴⁵ Yet, unlike direct insights, a practical insight grasps a possible unity to be brought into existence or a correlation that will establish an order for not yet existing events.⁴⁶ Practical insights, then, intend what is to be enacted in a particular situation.

⁴³ BYRNE, “Analogical Knowledge of God,” 117.

⁴⁴ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 632.

⁴⁵ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 632.

⁴⁶ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 633.

In grasping a possible course of action, the subject asks such questions as, “Should I do it?”⁴⁷ This kind of spontaneous question gives rise to a deliberation process that leads to a judgment of value. Questions for deliberation function formally in the same way as questions for reflection because both sets of questions seek to establish the grounds for a virtually unconditioned judgment. Yet, according to Patrick Byrne, the questions for deliberation seek to make a judgment based on a virtually unconditional value.⁴⁸ This means that a possible course of action is a value if there are no further pertinent questions that would modify, correct or add to the original practical insight.

In *Insight*, Lonergan elaborates on the further pertinent questions of practical reflection that lead to a judgment concerning practical insights.⁴⁹ Practical reflection consists of asking about the practical insight’s object and motives. Questioning the object consists in inquiring about the course of action’s “steps, alternatives, exclusions, consequences, its possibility or probability of execution.”⁵⁰ Motivations for the possible course of action are entertained such as its utility or agreeableness or value. Familiarity with the course of action and its consequences may make the questions for deliberation quick or unnecessary. In this case, habitual execution of the course of action has made the subject antecedently disposed to making certain kinds of decisions and accepting responsibility for them. Finally, through questions for practical reflection, the original practical insight may be corrected, changed or modified several times to meet the demands of responsible consciousness.

⁴⁷ BYRNE, “Analogical Knowledge of God,” 115.

⁴⁸ BYRNE, “Analogical Knowledge of God,” 115-116.

⁴⁹ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 633-634.

⁵⁰ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 633.

3.4. *Feelings in the Process of Deliberation*

Feelings also have a role to play in the process of deliberation. In *Method in Theology*, Lonergan notes that intentional responses to value, which are given in feeling, play an intermediary role between the assessment of a situation and a judgment of value.⁵¹ Lonergan makes the distinction between feelings as intentional responses to objects and feelings as non-intentional states and trends.⁵² Feelings as intentional responses intend or apprehend an object. By object is meant anything presented to consciousness including possibilities of action. These possibilities of action can refer to things that we want or do not want and/or courses of action that we are considering.

Lonergan makes a further distinction between feelings as intentional responses to value and feelings as intentional responses to the agreeable or disagreeable. Lonergan states, “In general, response to value both carries us towards self-transcendence and selects an object for the sake of whom or of which we transcend ourselves.”⁵³ Just how the response to value carries us to self-transcendence can be articulated by way of contrast with feelings that apprehend the agreeable or disagreeable. Intentional responses given in feelings that are agreeable are ambiguous. Agreeable feelings toward possible courses of action could mean that it is valuable but it could mean that it is just agreeable to the subject. Agreeable feelings regard objects in light of the self-as-constituted. Intentional responses to value might issue in positive feelings. However, what makes them unique is that intentional response to values supervene the narrower concerns brought to the fore by feelings that regard what is satisfying to the self-as-constituted. A truly worthwhile course of action may bring with it dissatisfaction and privation but, the

⁵¹ LONERGAN, *Method*, 37.

⁵² LONERGAN, *Method*, 30.

⁵³ LONERGAN, *Method*, 31.

subject “en-feels”⁵⁴ what it would be like to attain a goal worth the privation to the self-as-constituted.

A subject may forego satisfactions and take steps to achieve something of value that is felt as disagreeable to the self-as-constituted. For example, when one is learning a subject for the first time and must study extensively with only small, incremental results. The process of learning gives rise to privations and discomfort. Eventually the subject may find herself enjoying the subject matter and even the process of intellectual advance. The subject now regards intellectual exercise as agreeable because she has changed her constitution. Like a goal to be achieved, the subject endeavours to perform a course of action that will bring about the value-feeling in question. The supervening character of intentional responses to value have a self-transcendent thrust. These self-transcending feelings have the potential to serve a teleological function in deliberation and decision.⁵⁵ For example, in feeling for and with others, we can more easily self-transcend our limited constitutions and proceed with actions that do not necessarily lead to our own satisfaction. That is, we can en-feel how our actions may lead to the other’s satisfaction or flourishing as well as lead to a better, if not loving, relationship with that other.

Moreover, intentional responses given in feeling have a direct determinate role in the process of deliberation.⁵⁶ Byrne asserts that intentional responses given in feelings function to determine the pertinence of further questions toward coming to judgments of value. In this way, feelings directly determine the judgment of value insofar as they allow for or suppress further pertinent questions that would correct or modify the original practical insight. Hence, intentional

⁵⁴ BYRNE, “Analogical Knowledge of God,” 121.

⁵⁵ BYRNE, “Analogical Knowledge of God,” 120-121.

⁵⁶ BYRNE, “Analogical Knowledge of God,” 120-123.

responses to the agreeable would regard only the questions that pertain to the satisfaction of the subject. Self-transcending feelings, however, carry one beyond the concerns of self-interest to ask further pertinent questions regarding the value of the course of action. These questions would concern the consequences and motives of the action as it pertains to such patterns of cooperation as the family or the workplace.

This analysis has demonstrated the immanent movements and demands of the responsible level of consciousness. One is more or less responsible depending on how regularly she performs these operations in making decisions and performing actions. The decision to operate according to this basic pattern of responsible consciousness initiates moral conversion. For Lonergan, however, moral conversion does not mean moral perfection. It is a process one goes through. Moreover, this process is not undertaken by a subject as disengaged reasoner. The context is the subject as unity-in-tension, as shifting concerns, as caught between self-transcendence and the self-as-constituted. We will take up the biases in responsible decision-making caused by divergent concerns of the subject in the next chapter. But, the subject as morally converted aims to follow through on the operations of responsible consciousness.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have considered Lonergan's account of the three stages of meaning and ethical interiority as a means to address the problem of ethical abnegation as formulated in the writings of MacIntyre and Taylor. According to these authors, ethical theory can encourage self-centred modes of engagement in social living. However, their proposed ways for the subject to reason ethically both lack an adequate framework for the interior operations of responsible engagement. Such a framework can be found in Lonergan's account of the operations of responsible consciousness.

In the next chapter, we will take the stance of interiority and a new and important deficiency in ethical theory will be considered. Without the methodological stance and control of interiority, common sense bias interferes with the construction and appropriation of ethical theory. Moreover, without commitment to interiority, the common sense subject will be left to struggle with the seemingly insurmountable task of sorting through the melange of theory and common sense insights they have picked up along the way. The subject engaged in interiority is the one who notices the cognitive operations in act and they will notice one operation leading to the other. They will begin to understand that these operations follow an order and form a recurrent pattern. If one can understand them as a recurrent pattern operative when she is coming to know and to decide for value, she can begin to identify with the structure. She as a knower and actor of value is a responsible subject. To decide to follow these operations initiates a moral conversion which is a commitment to being authentic to oneself as a knower and decider of value. In the next chapter, we consider the biases that can prevent such authenticity in responsible engagement as well as explore the features and requirements of moral conversion as a commitment to operate as a knower and decider of value.

Chapter 5

Bias, Moral Conversion, and the Problem of Liberation

The research focus on the problem of ethical abnegation arises from the standpoint that an essential goal of ethical theory is encouraging responsibility for actions in concrete existence. In the last chapter we articulated three stages of meaning from which one can reflect ethically; namely, common sense, theory and interiority. The subject can differentiate these stages of meaning by engaging with the stage of interiority. From the standpoint of interiority, one can become attentive to her own operations of consciousness as she engages in acts of knowing and deciding. We posited that a turn to ethical interiority is needed to guide subjects toward making valuable decisions in everyday living. This is because responsibility is not only about fulfilling obligations or rules that may be derived from common sense or ethical theory. Responsible interiority refers to engaging in ethical questions in everyday living. It also refers to the human being purposely directing action toward self-transcendent and valuable ends in living. Abnegation refers to the idea that the cognitional processes for responsible actions are available to persons, but are not actually exercised and appreciated. It suggests that to not engage in ethical inquiry and development is to cast aside an essential resource for living authentically according to one's own responsible interiority.

In this chapter, we will take the position of responsible interiority and distinguish several biases and challenges to fulfilling its dictates. In the first section, we introduce Lonergan's account of three biases of common sense; namely, individual, group and the general bias of common sense. These biases can have devastating consequences for our ethical investigations and engagement in value on both a personal and social level. We will also offer a brief account of the relationship between these biases and current stances in ethical theory as presented by

MacIntyre and Taylor. In order to contend with these biases, one needs to make a commitment to fulfil the dictates of our responsible interiority. For Lonergan, this commitment is facilitated by moral conversion. Thus, in section two, I will return to the topic of moral conversion. We will note that moral conversion is not a theoretical position but an existential transformation that allows one to commit to performing actions according to value over immediate satisfactions. It also involves maintaining as much as possible the responsible concern for value. Concerns direct consciousness insofar as they determine those elements of the world in which we have interest. In other words, moral conversion initiates our continual expectation of the possibility of choosing value and thereby, we encourage responsibility in ourselves and others.

Still, moral conversion can be translated into theoretical language and developed into theoretically formulated positions for the student of ethics. In the third section, we will analyse Lonergan's rendition of the moral position in *Insight* with a view to articulate the difficulties in maintaining the orientation of responsible consciousness toward value. The central difficulty in maintaining an orientation to value is the nature of consciousness as multiply and divergently concerned. This multiplicity of concern can act as interference to responsible concern and its subsequent unfolding of operations toward grasping and enacting valuable courses of action. Lonergan's theoretical rendition of a position stemming from moral conversion can be used to define what it means for the subject to be morally converted. However, it is up to the individual to perform the method of self-appropriation to verify Lonergan's moral position and to decide to live according to one's correct understanding of the position.

In section four, we turn to the difficulty of confronting our limitations even if we authentically fulfil the dictates of responsible consciousness. Lonergan terms the inability to always choose the good as moral impotence because it is a limitation to our freedom. We will

note that bias and divergent concerns lead to moral impotence, but, the real challenge to hope in ethical reflection is the problem of liberation. The problem of liberation is that we act before we know how to act, yet, we are not antecedently open to learn all there is to know about how to act. Consciousness of our own moral impotence and its ongoing inevitability can cause us to despair significantly over our abilities to choose value and to do the good. This despair can lead to ethical abnegation that further exacerbates the problem of liberation. For Lonergan, it is necessary to retain hope in ethical reflection to engage in value and yet, we cannot ground such hope solely in our own abilities. We will note that, for Lonergan, ethical theory and interiority are limited in their ability to contend with the problem of liberation and there is need to turn to theology and its categories. In the next chapter, we will outline the need for religious conversion to enable the commitment to value made in moral conversion. In this chapter, I will illustrate why the commitment to responsible interiority made in moral conversion is necessary for ethical engagement, but that interiority alone is not enough to sustain the engagement especially if we despair over the worth of our ethical endeavours.

1. The Biases of Common Sense from the Standpoint of the Third Stage of Meaning

In the last chapter, we postulated that a lack of differentiation between the stages of meaning open to the subject for ethical reflection creates confusion about the purpose of ethical theory and what it means to be ethically engaged. We noted that the turn to the stage of interiority allows us to understand our own responsible cognitional processes of ethical reflection and engagement. Ethical theory can be based in the operations of responsible consciousness and be offered to others for self-appropriation of their own responsible consciousness. However, there are major hurdles in developing this kind of self-appropriation. In this section, we will introduce three biases of the common sense stage of meaning that can prohibit the turn to either

theoretical investigation or self-appropriation of one's interiority to develop responsible consciousness.

We begin with a summary comparison between common sense and theory from the standpoint of interiority. It will set the background for the depiction of individual bias, group bias and the general bias of common sense. We will identify the ways in which these biases manifest in the theories of subjectivism and emotivism. These theories are identified by MacIntyre and Taylor as Western culture's stumbling blocks to serious ethical reflection. Our analysis of bias commences with the individual bias of common sense because it is most easily recognizable as operative within emotivist and subjectivist theories of ethical reflection. Next we will explicate how individual bias can foster group bias. Lastly, we will consider how the general bias of common sense works to reinforce subjectivist and emotivist views in ethics. That is, common sense relates things to the subject's own current understanding of the world and what one cares about in that world. In other words, subjectivist and emotivist theories appear to be how ethical reflection works when operating according to the common sense stage of meaning.

The stage of interiority allows for an analysis of common sense and theory as two significant modalities of human knowing that operate according to different concerns of the subject.¹ These concerns augment what is perceived as "the world" and orients the subject toward different pursuits. Common sense pursuits tend to conflict with responsible consciousness' concern for value. This is because, to be in the common sense stage is to be in one's private world because all objects are related to one's understanding. That is, judgments about what one knows are based on the standards of "how things seem to me." Common sense, however, also draws from a fund of shared proverbs and generalizations about practical matters.

¹ LONERGAN, *Method*, 81-99.

For example, “The squeaky wheel gets the grease” or “People who live in glass houses should not throw stones.” In the common sense stage of meaning, generalization and exceptions to rules are tolerated. That is, one can always use her intelligence to understand how the generalization applies. This is using one’s common sense. Thus, one can relate new things and situations to a common understanding of the world or “how things seem like to us.” There can be common sense worlds of home and work, of nations and international communities. The overriding concern of this mode of intelligence is practical. Generalization and proverbial adherence are practical as a result of their ease of application without the use of specialized language or definitive understanding of situations. Common sense is used to navigate the concrete world of shifting circumstance.

In the stage of theory, one is trying to move past how things superficially appear. One enters a world of fixed terms and their relationships and strives to find out how terms really relate to each other. For example, a scientist strives to produce the evaluative criteria for her claims so that others may come to the same judgment. Circumstantial exceptions to these judgments are not tolerated. In the theoretical stage of meaning, the goal is universal law. To be a good theoretician, one must be preoccupied by intellectual concern. This is to pursue answers to the questions of intelligence and reflection in such a way that there are no further relevant questions that may augment the judgment. Unlike theory’s pure intellectual concern, common sense uses intelligence practically to ascertain relevant information to suit the needs of the situation. An authentic theoretician, however, seeks to use intelligence for discovery and is curious about knowing some aspect of the universe. When operating according to the pure intellectual desire to know, self-interests and group-interests are screened out because they are irrelevant to discovery. Of course, scientists can be bribed or threatened to skew their results. In

this case, the scientist is not being authentic to her basic operations of knowing and thereby, abnegates her identity as a knower.

1.1. The Biases: Individual, Group and General Bias of Common Sense

Susceptibility to bias is more prevalent when in the common sense world than it is in the theoretical world. This is because, for the common sense subject, concerns often blend and she is not solely led by a pure desire for truth or goodness. But, above all, “Common sense is practical.”² It is concerned to get things done. One is not operating in the world of theory or intellectual discovery, but rather, one is operating in a world where she must meet the demands of living. We have varying demands stemming from our biological needs, from our social networks, from our values and we must meet these demands with practical intelligence. We use our intelligence to meet these demands with tools and with social organization. For Lonergan, the common sense concern with meeting varying demands leaves the subject prone to certain biases that prohibit concern beyond the practical.

In *Insight*, bias prohibits and suppresses cognitional contents such as images, feelings, memories, past actions and further questions.³ Lonergan distinguishes four biases of common sense; namely, dramatic bias, individual bias, group bias and the general bias of common sense. We will focus our discussion on the last three because they can address unacknowledged confusions within the stances of current ethical theory as presented by MacIntyre and Taylor. These biases also provide materials for decisions and they give rise to what Lonergan calls the social surd.⁴ The social surd is a mixture of intelligible and unintelligible as well as responsible and irresponsible decisions about collaboration and organization among persons.

² LONERGAN, *Insight*, 232.

³ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 214-220, 244-251.

⁴ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 650-653.

We will briefly introduce the general features of individual, group and general bias before analyzing their possible effect on the current state of ethical theory and reflection. Individual bias blocks both the intersubjective feelings of belonging to a community and the further questions that would modify or correct one's judgments, decisions and actions. In blocking both these elements from conscious consideration, the individual proceeds in self-centred behaviours. Group bias allows the intersubjective feelings of belonging to a community to take hold of one's cognitional and volitional activities. One, then, makes decisions that ignore the wider community beyond one's group in favour of attaining the particular group's interests. Finally, there is general bias that tends to view the use of intelligence primarily as a tool for finding immediate solutions to practical problems. Long-term solutions often require extensive reflection on the solution's motivations, consequences, and further implications. However, the general bias prompts common sense to seek solutions that are judged to be the most immediate and practical courses of action. The consequences of decisions influenced by these biases gives rise to the social surd where the good is easily confused for self and group interests as well as the most immediate solution.

Still, for Lonergan, the common sense world concerned with practical goals is necessary for human living.⁵ Historically speaking, practically concerned intelligence emerges to devise plans of action to make the recurrent needs and desires of the intersubjective group easier and more efficient to attain. These needs and desires can be satisfied by particular goods. People gathered together can divide the tasks that are necessary to meet the recurrent needs of biology. Labour is divided among the group to attain the particular goods of biological sustenance. For example, to meet the recurrent needs of hunger, hunters take time out from hunting to fashion

⁵ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 232-33.

spears or traps. Besides tools, practical intelligence devises plans for greater accessibility to needs. So, one may conceive and actualize the growing plants and keeping flocks. With advancements in technology comes advancement in the economy. One can labour and one can own tools or land that make such labour easier. Persons, working together in an economy of interrelated desires, require the formation of a polity.

With the rise of the polity, the civil state, there emerges a different meaning of “good” besides individual desires and that is the intelligible good of order.⁶ The good of order relates to the stability and maintenance of patterns of cooperation meeting the need for individual goods. Decisions must be made about which practical insights must be put into effect in these patterns of cooperation. The goal of the political leader is to persuade persons to make mutually beneficial decisions. Unfortunately, political leaders can also be persuaded to make decisions that conform to short-sighted group or self-serving interests. Disregard of the intelligible good of order can thrust the social situation into decline and disintegration. To regard the good of order and make decisions that promote progress over decline, one must break out of the common sense mode concerned with practicality and move to a higher viewpoint consonant with the pure desire to know.

As common sense is the default mode of engagement with the world, it would be beneficial for everyone to come to understand it as one mode of understanding among others and that it can be preoccupied with practicality to our personal and collective detriment. Unlike the intellectual concern, the pure desire to know, when operating according to the mixed blends of concerns or practical concern, one can be swayed by self-interest and group interests.⁷ She might

⁶ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 232-33.

⁷ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 242-267.

not realize that to meet those demands she must work in collaboration with others. She might believe that the group's interests are more important than the questions she has about the way in which they collaborate. We can be so enmeshed in the practical concern that we do not attune ourselves to the pure desire to know.

Moreover, the general bias refers to the assumption that one's common sense is the only legitimate mode of investigation and that its judgments are determinative for all thought and action. Other modes of engagement are ruled out as time consuming or illegitimate or impractical. Hence the view that a withdrawal into philosophical or scientific theory to issue its results will take too much time and will prove indecisive in any event. In regard to ethical inquiry, the general bias narrows one's focus on finding those immediately practical ideas concerning the problems of the social situation so that other ideas are screened out in decision-making. The danger is that often the immediately practical course of action is not what is most beneficial for the social situation and the environment. For what seems most practical are those ideas that could be immediately acted upon because they satisfy some need or interest. This is where the general and group biases tend to overlap with one another. Those new ideas that are selected to augment the social situation to resolve its issues are often the ideas met with the least resistance. Groups in favour of the new ideas will put their power behind these ideas to ensure that they are put into practice. The power of groups can come from wealth, numbers or any other advantage over other groups who champion different ideas. If left unchecked, the general bias facilitates the ease with which interest groups manipulate the social situation for their own purposes.

Allowing the general bias to operate freely is also detrimental to the generations that come after us. There are considerable risks involved in making decisions on the assumption that

only immediately desirable courses of action are practical. These are the risks involved in dismissing the long-term orientation of the social and environmental situation. For the sake of the larger communal context, common sense, at some point, must yield to in-depth investigations into the possible long-term consequences of what it considers most immediately practical. If it never yields interest in immediate practical results, then the general bias has the potential to take over. Individuals and groups can be effectively discouraged from investigating and finding solutions that do not foreseeably pertain to immediate satisfactions. The general bias of common sense encourages borrowing the well-being of disadvantaged groups and future generations to pay current debts to satisfactions. Although common sense is utterly necessary for human survival, it needs other complementary modes of investigation and judgment to contend with long-term social planning.

1.2. Manifestations of the Biases of Common Sense

We have introduced the biases of the common sense stage of meaning and how they can mutually reinforce one another. We turn now to identifying the manifestation of these biases in the current state of ethical theory presented by MacIntyre and Taylor. These biases as well as the mixture of different stages of meaning leads to confusion about what it means to engage in ethical reflection. We begin by identifying individual bias operative within theories such as emotivism and subjectivism. The link between these theories and individual bias can be identified in the justifications they provide for the inadvertence to developing knowledge of ethical matters outside of personal preference and feeling a certain way about the matter. Individual bias is especially relevant in clarifying the tension between self-fulfillment and social well-being that Taylor emphasizes in his account of the higher ideal of authenticity. The individualist needs to understand that access to personal goods is conditioned by the functioning

patterns of cooperation among aggregates of individuals. If individuals do not participate according to the expectations of the pattern, cooperation ceases to function to provide the goods each individual seeks.

It would be beneficial for individuals operating within social organizations to understand that their patterns of cooperation fit into a larger pattern of the social order. It is not enough to consider the advantages of particular patterns to one's group to ensure the ongoing success and flourishing of the group. The Marxist analysis of history points to the prevalence of the dialectic between oppressing and oppressed groups with revolutionary consequences. The oppressed group amasses and gains enough power to overcome the dominant group, but the revolution does not end the dialectic. What is needed is cooperation among groups that is undergirded by a spirit of inquiry. The resolution of class and group conflicts requires a long-term and historically-minded commitment to investigating and finding solutions to problems. In the long-run, we must be committed to engage in ongoing and serious ethical reflection about how to negotiate compromises between groups. Such compromises will endeavour to provide the equal distribution of social burdens and access to goods. Without such persistent commitment to ongoing ethical reflection, group bias can support the inadvertence to ethical reflection toward others. This can lead to devastating conflict. Moreover, group bias reinforces individual bias. We have noted that if one is selfishly concerned, then seeking to know and care about issues beyond the self is less likely. This can be even more the case when the group bias is working in one's favour. For instance, group bias can be predisposed to working inequitably and disproportionately in favour of certain individuals or sectors of society; then mutual self-interest within the privileged group can over-ride the collective needs and desires of the excluded or subjugated.

Compared to the individual bias of common sense, it is less obvious how the general bias is operative in moral subjectivism and emotivism. However, it can be put succinctly. Over against theories that contradict “how things seem to me” in everyday living, the subject chooses to adopt the theory that appears to most closely resemble the common sense stance. According to Taylor, moral subjectivism is the view that moral positions are really grounded in preference.⁸ We do not adopt moral positions because we have reasons for them or because these positions are grounded in our nature. Moral positions are adopted because something in us desires and prefers some positions over others. Subjectivism views the sources of moral demands on us as properly and strictly emanating from the self. In this way, moral subjectivism stands with the common sense viewpoint and says, “Morality is what you make it.” This is not merely a selfish or narcissistic choice, but rather, one is taking a stand with the theory that seems to align with how morality really works. As situated within the common sense stage of meaning, subjectivism may not actually derive from some narcissistic impulse telling the subject to choose the most advantageous ethical framework for achieving one's individual wants. The common sense stance has us relate all new information to what we currently understand so that we can use that information practically to inform living. The theory of subjectivism is practical insofar as it can be understood and used immediately by common sense.

In the case that one is not familiar with interiority, common sense serves as the basis of how ethical reflection seems to operate. From the stance of common sense, subjectivism appears to “work” with routine choices. It appears that one simply chooses what is good based on what one does habitually. Even when these decisions are not based on habits, the interior operations of choice occur so quickly and without notice that it seems as though there is no advertence to the

⁸ TAYLOR, *Malaise*, 18-19.

subject's understanding of the situation or of their preferences rooted in previous value assessments. It may be the case that the subject asks questions of value too, but, they are unnoticed. However, without advertence to the questions of value pertaining to courses of action they are unlikely to be questions that actually initiate moral self-transcendence. Again, this advertence is not the responsibility of theory, it is up to us, as individuals, to ask moral questions. Even if we do not do it often or advert to ethical questions often enough to notice, this does not mean that ethical theory based on interiority is inaccurate. It means we are not enacting our ethical interiority.

Recall the either/or choice of troubled consciousness: either theory or common sense can tell me about responsible living. Most opt for common sense, but, without thinking about it. Theorists of ethics and their students can do this as well and even allow common sense principles to enter into their theoretical foundations. According to MacIntyre, this is precisely what Stevenson and other emotivists did when developing their ethical theory. For MacIntyre, "Emotivism is the doctrine that all evaluative judgments and more specifically moral judgments are *nothing but* expressions of preference, expressions of attitude or feeling, insofar as they are moral or evaluative in character."⁹ Emotivist theory claims that no objective or impersonal standards have *ever* existed to secure rational justification and thus, agreement about moral judgments has *never* been achieved through rational means. However, Stevenson developed such a position by observing the way G.E. Moore and other intuitionists at Cambridge made pronouncements based on feelings and ideas that spontaneously arose. Stevenson claimed that this is what all ethical theorists must have done throughout history. From the stance of interiority, what emotivism seems to be describing is the person in everyday living operating

⁹ MACINTYRE, *After Virtue*, 11-12. MacIntyre's emphasis.

according to what one spontaneously feels and thinks according to current habitual tendency.

This modality of common sense is then used as a starting point for an ethical theory that targets the as-is character of the person rather than the person as self-transcending and authentic. From the standpoint of common sense, ethical theory becomes a matter of explaining the ways in which all decisions are reducible to feeling certain ways about things.

Thus, the antagonists of MacIntyre's *After Virtue* are not just historically narrow in their assessment and development of ethical theory; they are also succumbing to the general bias of common sense. This helps to explain why a theory stemming from observation of one particular group of Cambridge intellectuals developed into a more prevalent ethical theory. What Stevenson observed was, in fact, common sense ethical judgment masquerading as theory. The popular acceptance of the theory can be explained in part by the fact that the common sense modality of knowing is operative in all persons. While emotivism may "fit" a description of the typical situation of how we make decisions in daily life, it overlooks the operations of consciousness that are not typically adverted to in the common sense stage of meaning. Because most decisions, whether authentic or not, are done in the stage of common sense, we are at a disadvantage when it comes to analysing them and transposing them into ethical theory. It is also difficult to stop the flow of life to recall ethical theories and to make decisions accordingly. Yet, moral reflection done in the stage of interiority is not about recalling theory, but rather, it is about adverting to and following through on the processes of one's own ethical questions.

Moreover, from the standpoint of interiority, emotivism over-emphasizes the feeling state of the person toward objects and situations. Within the context of interiority, feelings within responsible consciousness do arise spontaneously toward objects as they are focused on. However, there is also operative within the individual her understanding, reasoning and decision-

making capacities. Depending on the authenticity of the subject, the feelings will be investigated or treated as a part of a larger endeavour of decision-making. Our interior trajectory is thereby oriented toward doing the good thing and not just what feels good spontaneously. The authentic place of feelings in ethical reflection is as a guide for further investigation. There must be something beyond feelings that can correct or guide those feelings. Otherwise, if one sticks to feelings as the only guide, there is no orientation toward personal or societal development. One is just doing what the self-as-constituted feels like doing. This is contrary to how persons can feel self-transcendent feelings directed toward value. We can decide based on those self-transcendent feelings, but this also requires critical reflection. In other words, questioning our feelings allows us to go beyond our habitual orientations and activities. This necessitates a turn to the stage of interiority.

However, there is still troubled consciousness for there is still the lack of differentiation and comfortability with switching back and forth between theory, common sense and interiority. In the common sense stage of meaning, we are paying attention to the contents or the objects of our operations of knowing. It is interiority that develops our attentiveness to the operations themselves. By engaging in the stage of interiority, we can become aware of how we make truly valuable decisions through the operations of consciousness. From there, we can set out terms and relationships among these operations in theory. Ethical theory can be populated by systematic accounts of the varying interactions and consequences of following through with the operations of consciousness toward the act of value judgment and decision. But, even when the theory is based on interiority, that theory is just a theory to common sense without the subject adverting to the context of interiority and its operations. Because of the gulf between theory and ordinary practice in decision-making, we are prone to think that theory ought to reflect ordinary practice

and in the instance that it does not, it would be deemed not to work. But, what if our ordinary practices in our common sense worlds are not up to the challenge presented by a theory? In other words, what if our ordinary thoughts on ethics are not correct and we are not actually as ethically astute as we think we are? Rejection of theory makes sense if it does not actually correspond to how we operate, but rejection of theory can be due to our not reaching up to the challenge of our own responsible consciousness.

Theories like Lonergan's can provide a map for investigating one's own interiority. We can begin to know ourselves as knowers and deciders. Getting acquainted with one's responsible consciousness requires a movement to interiority. Such a movement to interiority may at first be consciously encountered in theoretical presentations. However, the turn to interiority is not meant to only take place when reading a theory or listening to the presentations of lecturers. One encounters interiority through encounters with one's processes of knowing and valuing. And to do this, one has to attempt to know and to value. This might be challenging to some, but ordinary living is full of moments of knowing and deciding. We are spontaneous knowers and deciders. One does not have to be a theoretician to know as one does not have to be a moral hero to do something good for someone else. To become acquainted with and to decide to act according to the dictates of one's responsible consciousness allows for an increase in the frequency of ethical engagement in concrete situations.

Still, the turn to interiority is not just a means to be more responsible in concrete situations, it is also a means to contend with the biases of common sense. In this section, we have illustrated the ways in which common sense bias can negatively affect our lives personally and socially. It can also affect ethical theory. To overcome common sense bias, we need a turn to interiority because it is by taking our ethical questions seriously that we can seek to understand

situations and to make decisions based on value. By taking our questions seriously, we can more and more come to correctly understanding the patterns of cooperation in which we are a part. We can question the good of such patterns of cooperation as separate from self or group interests. Moreover, we can question the courses of action we devise to contribute to patterns of cooperation. We can decipher whether our actions are motivated by feelings and outcomes related to self or group satisfaction. To distinguish whether we are motivated by value or satisfactions is a means to scrutinize whether we are performing authentically according to responsible consciousness. For Lonergan, an essential key to such authentic ethical engagement is a turn to interiority. We now turn to Lonergan's account of moral conversion because it offers an explanation of what living according to the commitment to ethical interiority requires of the subject.

2. Moral Conversion as Moral Engagement in the Third Stage of Meaning

The turn to interiority is a necessary step for the subject who desires both to live authentically according to responsible consciousness and to contend with the biases of common sense. However, interiority is a specialized stage of meaning in which one cannot operate for very long without the need to return to the common sense stage of meaning. This means that what is understood and known in interiority must be integrated into common sense terms and practices. That is, it must become "how things seem like to me." How is this done? Lonergan does not go into great detail about the transposition process, but, he has a name for its beginning: conversion. We can undergo transformative experience of truth that allows us to operate according to the immanent dictates of rational consciousness and this is intellectual conversion. We can also undergo transformative experience of goodness that allows us to operate according to the immanent dictates of responsible consciousness and this is moral conversion. That is, we

can have transformative experience with truth and value that allows us to make existential commitments to follow the immanent dictates of conscious intentionality toward truth and goodness. In the following section, we will explore Lonergan's account of moral conversion as a commitment to moral engagement in concrete living.

Moral conversion allows the commitment to living a life in the horizon of value. It refers to transformative experiences with value that can reshape horizons if they are appropriated and are allowed to orient our habitual decision-making. According to Lonergan, "Moral conversion changes the criterion of one's decisions and choices from satisfactions to values."¹⁰ Thus, moral conversion is a challenging transformation of our existential horizons toward the pursuit of value. While a visual horizon sets limits on what one can see, an existential horizon sets the limits on what one knows and what objects in the world hold one's interest.¹¹ Concern selects one's horizon by orienting the flow of consciousness. In *Topics in Education*, Lonergan asserts the importance of "horizon" as an educational tool to speak about human development especially in connection with the selection of the flow of consciousness as a vehicle of development.¹² One expands current horizons through acts of knowing and valuing that ultimately begin in concerns of intelligence. There are multiple concerns of consciousness including the practical, intellectual, biological and mystical. We can select our concern that orients the flow of consciousness. The concern that moral conversion prioritizes is value such that other concerns as well as satisfactions hold less interest. Religious conversion is "being grasped by ultimate concern."¹³

¹⁰ LONERGAN, *Method*, 240.

¹¹ LONERGAN, *Method*, 235-237.

¹² Bernard J.F. LONERGAN, *Topics in Education: The Cincinnati Lectures of 1959 on the Philosophy of Education*, ed. Robert M. Doran and Frederick E. Crowe. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 84-106.

¹³ LONERGAN, *Method*, 240.

We will discuss religious conversion in the next chapter. The salient point now is that conversions allow the decision to prioritize certain concerns that lead to the transformation and expansion of one's horizons.

Another way to understand moral conversion is an exercise of vertical liberty that allows the commitment to value in living. An exercise of vertical liberty can be distinguished from horizontal liberty. Lonergan asserts, "Horizontal liberty is the exercise of liberty within a determinate horizon and from the basis of a corresponding existential stance. Vertical liberty is the exercise of liberty that selects that stance and the corresponding horizon."¹⁴ Most decisions are exercises of horizontal freedom when choices are made among the known and the cared about. We are not selecting a stance. However, in exercises of vertical freedom, we are committing to take a stand with a particular concern. With intellectual conversion, for example, the subject can choose to take a stand with the intellectual concern, which Lonergan also calls the unrestricted desire to know. The intellectual concern unfolds toward critical judgments of fact that expand one's horizons. Another way to understand intellectual conversion is as a commitment to the development of one's knowledge through the operations of rational consciousness. The commitment to operate rationally challenges one to maintain horizons that lead to new discoveries. A central existential difficulty involved in the commitment of conversions is that new discoveries can challenge that which was once believed within older horizons. In other words, conversions are about maintaining commitment to development of horizons while contending with knowledge and beliefs in older horizons.

Moral conversion leads to a commitment to maintain a horizon focused on value that challenges us to think and act differently. Moral conversion's new existential stance rejects one

¹⁴ LONERGAN, *Method*, 240.

typical feature of older horizons and that is living according to satisfactions. For Lonergan, satisfactions are not inherently bad or wrong to pursue. Certainly, self or group interests can determine what we find to be satisfying and lead to detrimental decisions. However, what allows for these interests to rule and what is most likely to contribute to living according to satisfactions is ethical abnegation. This means not taking our own ethical questions seriously, namely, “what should I do and is it valuable?” Though we cannot live out every decision based on these questions, we ought not to live as though the questions do not matter. The morally converted person lives with the questions squarely in her horizons and she strives to answer them with more and more practice.

Moreover, moral conversion affects the way that one engages with others as an actor in the social world. It entails the realization of the subject that she is an originating value. That is, with every decision and action the subject is creating herself as a certain kind of person. Judgments, decisions and actions accumulate towards the formation of habits and dispositions. Others may then come to know us as the kind of person that has good judgment, makes good decisions and fulfills commitments. The community could equally come to know us as persons that judge poorly, make bad decisions and do not fulfill commitments. Yet, by choosing what we make of ourselves we have more self-control over what we will be and thereby, we create the possibility of our becoming originating values. We can choose to be principles of beneficence and benevolence within our community.

The moment of conversion can be difficult to pinpoint. Lonergan describes an existential realization involved in human beings becoming generally responsible. This can be summarized as “I help to make myself and I affect the world around me.” At each moment, one can choose to do something that affects the world while building him or herself up as a certain kind of person.

This is the case regardless of the individual's commitment to value. One can equally be committed to satisfactions. This is a selfish commitment to satisfaction that is likely to stall development. When one is morally converted, she endeavours to make herself a principle of value and to affect the world around her in positive ways. She can build herself up authentically by following the dictates of responsible consciousness. Part of this authentic self-creation is putting off current satisfactions for valuable outcomes. For example, I can invest my time and energy into learning how to eat and study better and then do it. It will involve deprivation of satisfaction for the sake of future well-being. Authentic developments engender privation for the sake of building oneself up in valuable ways. Without any commitment to building up the self through one's decisions, one is just drifting through life. Although not necessarily selfish, drifting is inauthentic to one's potential capacity for self-making.

Another way to understand moral conversion is that it allows for decision to operate in the world in accordance with the dynamic structure of fourth level conscious and intentional operations. That is, we are attentive to the world in our experiencing, we are seeking understanding and truth and we are endeavouring to be responsible. To be responsible is to contribute to the intelligibility, the truthfulness and responsibility of the world. This is a technical formulation of transcendental method, but, it could also be said that it is a commitment to self-transcendence. For the sake of value, the morally converted subject is willing to develop or to self-transcend in terms of her knowledge, emotional attunement, willingness, and skills. In this way, moral conversion is a commitment to self-transcendence.

Loneragan makes clear in *Method in Theology* that moral conversion does not mean that one is morally perfect.¹⁵ The commitment to value is rooted in the interiority of the subject and

¹⁵ LONERAGAN, *Method*, 240.

nowhere else. It is not to be found externally in a set of rules or in any theory. Existential commitment to value requires a profound transformation of the subject. That is, moral conversion requires continual commitment to learning how to be better at being responsible and to having the willingness to learn and change for the better. As Lonergan states,

Deciding is one thing, doing is another. One has yet to uncover and root out one's individual, group, and general bias. One has to keep developing one's knowledge of human reality and potentiality as they are in the existing situation. One has to keep distinct its elements of progress and its elements of decline. One has to keep scrutinizing one's intentional responses to values and their implicit scales of preference. One has to listen to criticism and to protest. One has to remain ready to learn from others. For moral knowledge is the proper possession only of morally good men and, until one has merited that title, one has still to advance and to learn.¹⁶

One would be constantly transcending the self-as-constituted by gaining knowledge of human situations, devising and deciding which possible courses of action are the most valuable and maintaining the willingness to execute valued actions. This does not make the theoretical expression of Lonergan's position on ethical interiority inaccurate. Rather, it makes the theoretical expression inadequate for the task of representing lived reality and the many ways interiority can function to address this lived reality.

A theory cannot replace the commitment necessary to living a life according to value stemming from one's interiority. Actual decisions come down to the subject. Ethical theory can be appropriated such that one understands it and then uses it to guide one's living. Thus, ethical theory based on interiority can help to articulate and to decipher the way human knowing and deciding unfolds. Theory can also obfuscate the very same process. The way to "check" whether theory is accurate about human knowing is not necessarily through more theory, but rather, through development of interiority that is a heightening awareness and sensitivity to the immanent dictates of attaining truth and goodness.

¹⁶ LONERGAN, *Method*, 240.

The morally converted subject lives out of a horizon that has been transformed such that one opts for value rather than satisfactions. As long as one is concerned with value, she is oriented in her endeavours to ask ethical questions and choose to build toward the good. This orientation to value is not granted by a theory or by wishful thinking or by any outside force. The orientation toward value is pursued by the individual in the concrete situation. However, there are other concerns vying for our attention besides the concern for value in our everyday living. In the next section, we will address these other concerns and the ways in which they can interfere with the unfolding of responsible consciousness toward value by directing concern elsewhere.

3. Bias of Multiple Concerns Interfering with Moral Engagement

In this section, we turn to *Insight*'s discussion of the relationship between the multiple concerns of consciousness and living up to theoretical expressions of moral conversion and its oppositional stance. These theoretical expressions are termed the moral position and counterposition. We will note that Lonergan's ethical subject is not conceived of as the disengaged rational subject of Descartes or even Taylor's subject engaged in everyday ethical activities. Lonergan's ethical subject is a unity-in-tension among varying orienting concerns and stages of meaning. Ethical concern is but one possible thrust of consciousness. To select it and to reinforce the concern for value is a continual task of the subject.

In what is to follow, we will hypothesize what it means to embody moral conversion perfectly according to an ideal moral position. We will introduce the multiply concerned subject in the common sense stage of meaning as well as what this means for maintaining the moral position. We delve into the existential challenge of maintaining the moral position in terms of one's interiority. Certainly, we can develop our moral interiority to become more and more

responsible in our living. However, according to *Insight*, the multiple concerns of consciousness make it difficult to maintain the theoretical position in an existential way.

We have noted that moral conversion is a commitment to value that involves an attunement and maintenance of a concern for value. As long as one is oriented by value concerns, she is interested in asking and answering questions about the worth of her actions and her projects of living. However, in our everyday living, we need to address other concerns besides value. For example, we need to address biological concerns for food and sleep. Thus, in order to function, we must address concerns that maintain our living. To do this we need to enter into the common sense stage of meaning and use our practically concerned intelligence. To phrase the point positively, we need multiple concerns and common sense to survive and we need orientation to value and responsible interiority to flourish.

We begin our consideration of what it means to maintain a concern for value with a brief consideration of Lonergan's theoretically articulated moral position based in responsible consciousness. Its fulfilment is what the morally converted person endeavours to do.

Existentially fulfilling Lonergan's moral position would mean that one:

lumps objects of desire along with objects of aversion as instances of the potential good, subordinates both to the formal good of order, and selects between alternative orders by appealing to the rational criteria that are the sources of the meaning of the name value.¹⁷

In this way, one would be constantly monitoring and checking one's desires and aversions against that which is judged as truly good. Desires and aversions, then, would have to be subordinated to contribute to a good of order. In order to realize a value, one has to decide between alternative courses of action based on its contribution to the formal good of order and have the willingness to execute it. For Lonergan, the moral position will likely remain a

¹⁷ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 647-648.

theoretical achievement considering the unity-in-tension of the human being's multiple concerns. The following paragraphs aim to illustrate why this is the case.

For Lonergan, consciousness is a flow that involves a temporal succession of contents, such as memories, images, judgments and decisions. The orientation of that flow is directed by concern.¹⁸ We noted that this flow can be directed by the concern for value or for truth. Concern for truth and value are consonant with the basic orientation of consciousness. Concerns select our existential horizons or what we have interest in within our worlds. Hence, our existential horizons can be consonant with the pure desire to know and the unrestricted desire for value.

However, common sense can also direct us toward practically getting things done. This is an essential aspect of our living and survival. Yet, common sense can take over our intelligent inquiries. We have seen that its general bias can sway us to pursue intelligent inquiry based exclusively on knowing so that we can practically get things done. Intelligence is used to solve immediate problems or needs of the situation over-against discovering truth for its own sake. Common sense practical intelligence can also narrow our horizons toward self and group interests over-against truth or value.

3.1. Patterns of Experience

In this section, we focus on other sources of interference with intelligent inquiry that cause us to ignore value in the common sense stage of meaning. In particular, we are speaking of concerns that arise at the level of experience not directed by value.¹⁹ These are the multiple concerns discovered in experience by practical intelligence. These concerns of experience act as orientations for investigation and our activities in the world. According to Lonergan, the flow of

¹⁸ LONERGAN, *Topics*, 83-97.

¹⁹ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 205-206.

one's experience may be patterned as "biological, aesthetic, artistic, dramatic, practical, or mystical. These patterns alternate; they blend or mix; they can interfere, conflict, lose their way, break down."²⁰ In this way, the human being often experiences itself as a unity-in-tension between the multiple concerns of experience within the flow of consciousness.

For Lonergan, the flow of one's sensitive experience is a chameleon that is subject to differing concerns that intelligibly organize sensation, bodily movements, images, memories, conations.²¹ These organizing concerns function to pattern experience and orient the subject towards differing terminal activities. For example, in the biological pattern of experience one's sensitive spontaneity is concerned with outward activities such as eating and sleeping. Besides the biological pattern of experience, *Insight* contains reference to the aesthetic, the practical, the intellectual, the dramatic and the mystical patterns of experience. To say that one enters into a particular pattern of experience is to say that the flow of one's sensitive experience is being specifically organized by a controlling concern toward a specific terminal activity.

The subject's activities are oriented by different concerns depending on the dynamic pattern of experience.²² The fact of our differing concerns has implications for both our cognitional activities and, by extension, our behaviour and performance in our everyday living. In terms of one's cognitional activities, the patterns of experience have a direct bearing on the kinds of insights that one comes to have. This is because, before there are insights, there must be sensitive and imaginative presentations. Irrelevant presentations are screened by concern from the pattern of experience and the relevant presentations are selected to be entertained by

²⁰ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 410.

²¹ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 209. For Lonergan's account of the patterns of experience operative in the common sense subject see LONERGAN, *Insight*, 204-212.

²² LONERGAN, *Insight*, 206.

understanding. To illustrate this point, Lonergan gives the example of Thales and the milkmaid.²³ Thales was so intent on the study of the stars that he failed to lower his head to the ground and so, fell into a well. The milkmaid was so intent on the well that she failed to look at the stars. One could say that Thales is operating according to the concerns of the intellectual pattern of experience and the milkmaid is operating in accordance with a practically concerned intelligence meeting the demands of experience. One can reasonably guess that the milkmaid wanted to drink some water. Therefore, she was using her practical intelligence to meet the concerns of a biological need for hydration. One can also reasonably guess that she was trying to fulfill her obligations in the pattern of cooperation that demanded her services to get some water. Still, practically concerned intelligence is meeting the needs of an anticipated concern of biological experience. Thus, patterns of experience conditions the direction of one's conscious activities and ultimately, bear on the activities one performs.

Common sense subjectivity ordinarily defaults to a mixture of mostly undifferentiated concerns that suit the needs of one's living in the drama of existence. More specifically, Lonergan asserts that the subject tends to live out its existence within a mixture of the dramatic, artistic and practical patterns of experience.²⁴ A pattern of experience is shaped by an orienting concern, which can be identified by the student of interiority as either a question or a goal. Each pattern unfolds in a unique way, but in daily life the orientations and patterns are blended. In the treatment of the common sense subject in *Insight*, the dramatic pattern of experience is said to blend with the concerns of biological needs and practically concerned intelligence.²⁵ In this way, one tries to fulfill her role in the drama of human living by performing the tasks that are expected

²³ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 205.

²⁴ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 647-648.

²⁵ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 210-212.

of her due to her role in a pattern of cooperation. One endeavours to balance the needs of biological drives with social expectation in a creative way. At the same time, subjects need to be practical in order to get things done and thus, one uses her intelligence to achieve the demands of living in efficient ways.

Lonergan does not mention the intellectual pattern of experience when he refers to the mixture of orienting concerns of daily existence. However, the intellectual drive is still present within the person. Intelligence discovers a pattern in the experience and reinforces the concerns of experience. Moreover, the pursuit of understanding is still operative to gain insights into situations. However, it is only in the intellectual pattern of experience that the dynamism of the human spirit is free to allow the pure desire to know to completely orient the concerns of the subject. Understanding and knowing is pursued for its own sake. The intellectual pattern would be that mode of experience that orients the subject toward exact definitions and theoretical expressions.²⁶ Ordinarily, the subject's intellectual capacities are used practically to meet the needs of other orienting concerns especially the biological.²⁷ Practical intelligence in the common sense stage of meaning desires to understand and know to get things done for the sake of experiential concerns.

Thus, in everyday living, we are often directed by practical intelligence using common sense generalizations to meet the demands of experience. The exclusion of the pure intellectual concern among the everyday concerns of living serves a pedagogical point. Lonergan is critical of the overemphasis placed on practically concerned intelligence in the social world. Common

²⁶ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 209-210.

²⁷ Mark J. DOORLEY. *The Place of the Heart in Lonergan's Ethics: The Role of Feelings in the Ethical Intentionality Analysis of Bernard Lonergan*. (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1996), 79.

sense stances often use arguments of immediate practicality to dismiss intellectual or theoretical pursuits. Moreover, subjects led primarily by practical concerns are susceptible to the general bias of common sense.²⁸ This bias assumes that thought and action ought to be determined by the most immediate practical results for me and mine. That which is immediately practical is most often determined by what suits satisfactions and not what is judged to be of most value considering the larger social context.

Lonergan's *Insight* suggests that, besides practically swayed intelligence meeting immediate needs, the biological concern is the most prominent concern that promotes blockages to intellectual drive and the pursuit of value. Biological concern is at the root of one pole of the fundamental tension in orientation between limitation and transcendence.²⁹ The other pole stems from the intellectual desire to know. Lonergan explains this tension in terms of the object and subject of conscious intentionality. In terms of the object, the human being, like all animals, spontaneously orients herself to function within a "narrow world of stimuli and responses."³⁰ Yet, because of our intelligence, we are also oriented toward a universe of being to be known through understanding and judgment. In terms of the subject, in the biological pattern of experience, we operate according to the narrow concerns dictated by self-interest and self-attachment. Through our intelligence, however, we may enter into a universe of being and the history of humankind not as the centre of reference, but rather, as belonging to a larger project of

²⁸ The general bias is often exacerbated by dramatic, individual and group bias. On the connection between polymorphic consciousness and bias leading to counterpositions, see: LONERGAN, *Insight*, 415. For Lonergan's account of the four biases of common sense, see: LONERGAN, *Insight*, 214-223; 244-257.

²⁹ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 648.

³⁰ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 498. We share in the motivational triad with animals: pleasure seeking, pain avoidance and conservation of energy.

life in which we may participate through disinterested and detached investigation. Thus, the human being is at once a self-interested being responding to an environment and a disinterested, intelligent, rational and responsible being within a world mediated by meaning and motivated by value. It is this opposition that is central to the tension between limitation and transcendence in human development.

3.2. Authenticity and Inauthenticity

The basic tension of limitation and transcendence manifests itself in the existential subject as the opposition in orientation between the concerns of the self-as-one-is and the concerns of the self-as-one-could-be: a self that is more intelligent, rational, responsible and loving. This fundamental tension not only manifests itself in ordinary human living, but also finds its way into philosophical positions.³¹ For Lonergan, a position is a philosophical stance that coheres to the basic pattern of cognitional operations and its subsequent epistemology. A counterposition refers to a stance that is incoherent with the basic pattern of cognitional operations. The positions of philosophy expand into metaphysical, theological and moral stances that serve as theoretical tools for dialectical analysis. For our purposes, the positions point to how the subject could develop or transcend the self-as-is.³² Inversely, counterpositions tend to obscure what it means to develop and transcend one's limits.

The moral position is an ideal way of living accessible to those who fully perform in accordance with Lonergan's theoretical expression of what living up to our responsible consciousness entails. In *Insight*, Lonergan articulates what performing according to the moral position demands of the person:

³¹ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 410-415.

³² LONERGAN, *Insight*, 414-415.

[This person] lumps objects of desire along with objects of aversion as instances of the potential good, subordinates both to the formal good of order, and selects between alternative orders by appealing to the rational criteria that are the sources of the meaning of the name value.³³

Living up to this standard of performance implies that a person has undertaken two central tasks in one's moral development. The first task involves understanding and knowing how to contend with the three levels of the human good.³⁴ The second refers to living up to the potential of the pattern of intentional operations involved in responsible consciousness.

The first task pertains to understanding and affirming that there are three different kinds of goods that vie for consideration during decision-making that adopt more or less responsibility for the patterns of cooperation in which we participate.³⁵ "Objects of desire or aversion" refer to the goods individuals seek for their satisfaction, but individual goods are most commonly accessed through a different kind of good, the "formal good of order." For the individual to get what she wants on a regular basis she needs to cooperate with others. This cooperation requires a set of known standards of behavior. For example, one attains food in exchange for money from a grocer. In order for that grocer to operate and provide individuals with recurrent access to food, clients are obliged to pay for and not steal these goods. Hence, participating in the good of order requires one to go beyond considering only one's satisfactions so that they are in tune with what is expected of individuals within cooperating communities to ensure recurrent access to individual goods.

Lonergan reserves the term value for the third and highest kind of good in which one can participate, but this necessitates *judgment* of the worth of a good of order. To participate in the

³³ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 647-648.

³⁴ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 619-621. See also: LONERGAN, *Topics in Education*, 33-38.

³⁵ Kenneth R. MELCHIN, *Living with Other People: An Introduction to Christian Ethics based on Bernard Lonergan*. (Ottawa: Novalis, 1998), 36-60.

second kind of good, the good of order, entails that one *understands* and performs according to the standards and expectations inherent to a given cooperative enterprise. One's good performance in this cooperation means acting to uphold the order of a pattern of cooperation that fulfills the satisfactions of individuals. Participation in the third kind of good involves understanding a pattern of cooperation and then asking a question such as, "Is this ordered pattern of cooperation actually good?" One could add qualifiers that extend the thrust of truth and value. Thus, one could ask, "Is this order actually good not only for me, but for all the persons involved now and possibly in the future?" This kind of questioning about value initiates the cognitive and affective operations of a judgment of value.

A judgment of value is that which "selects between alternative orders" by appealing to the subject's formulation of what kind of good of order she deems worthy, as in responsible, to participate in and to foster. For example, to go along with a pattern of cooperation that one knows benefits some members at the expense of others is irresponsible. Responsibility implies openness and willingness to augment current patterns of cooperation or to initiate new patterns that respond to the needs of persons involved.³⁶ To judge whether or not a course of action is valuable means asking and answering critical questions that lead to an affirmation that this action will meet the demands of a responsible ordering of a pattern of cooperation. In other words, a judgment of value most often refers to affirming that one's actions will condition the possibility of maintaining, initiating or augmenting the good order of a pattern of cooperation considered beneficial for all involved.³⁷

³⁶ BYRNE, "Analogical Knowledge," 124.

³⁷ Kenneth R. MELCHIN, "Ethics in Insight," in Fred Lawrence, ed., *Loneragan Workshop 8* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press 1990), 145.

The second task implied in fully living according to the moral position is to commit oneself to making decisions and to performing actions based on judgments of value, whenever applicable and to the best of one's abilities. This involves following a methodology of decision-making based on the pattern of conscious and intentional operations of responsible consciousness or what Lonergan calls in *Insight* "rational self-consciousness."³⁸ To perform according to the dictates of responsible consciousness means that one actually performs that which is judged or known to be the most valuable course of action.³⁹ Lonergan emphasizes the fact that even if one knows the best course of action, it does not guarantee that one has the willingness to carry it out. Knowing and doing are two different modes of engaging with the world. There is an exigency to perform according to what one knows in responsible consciousness that is not as central in rational consciousness, which is a mode that pertains to judgments of fact. This is because responsible consciousness is that mode of engagement with the world that attends to and allows one to make decisions about one's performance and orientation in life projects.

The theoretical expression of the intentional and conscious operations involved in responsible consciousness indicates that judgments of value are preceded by judgments of fact.⁴⁰ This requirement and pursuit of knowing is evident in living. We must know something about a situation to act within it. We must know something about how to do something before we do it. In the case of contributing to the flourishing of an existent pattern of cooperation, the subject must first assess the situation by fulfilling the dictates of a judgment of fact. Assessing a situation requires attending to the flow of experience at hand, which includes the sensuous and

³⁸ See, for example: LONERGAN, *Insight*, 646; LONERGAN, *Method in Theology*, 9.

³⁹ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 625-626; 634-639.

⁴⁰ BYRNE, "Analogical Knowledge," 109-125; LONERGAN, *Insight*, 619-642; LONERGAN, *Method in Theology*, 27-55.

feelings as well as past insights and judgments. This points to the fact that all of the elements of one's subjectivity are working with the concern for value for the sake of the good.

For Lonergan, all elements of one's subjectivity are working with the concern for value. Thus, one's experience is not only the first level of conscious intentionality, it is also that which opens the subject up to questions for understanding the situation on the second level of consciousness. One gains insight into situations by grasping relations or sets of relations among the various parts. Insights are not always correct and they need verification through the processes of judgment, the third level of consciousness. Coming to an affirmation about the relationships or understanding of the ordering of a pattern of cooperation requires gathering evidence. This evidence may not be immediately accessible and thus, one must reflect further on what kind of evidence would establish the conditions for asserting whether something is the case. These sets of conditions also allow for the assessment that something is or is not the case or probably the case.

Yet, the ultimate goal of responsible consciousness is not to assess situations. Its goal is to allow the subject to become an originating value through one's performance.⁴¹ This often happens when one's actions contribute to beneficial orientations of patterns of cooperation. Thereby, one also becomes an example to others. As already indicated, to be an originating value requires performing the operations involved in judgments of value which select between courses of action that would contribute to the kind of social project that one deems worthy to exist. It is not guaranteed that one will become and always be an originating value by following the dictates of responsible consciousness, but it is a method that will likely achieve better results than if one avoids it all together.

⁴¹ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 624-625; LONERGAN, *Method in Theology*, 50-53.

It is difficult to describe what it means for one to avoid responsible consciousness. However, one can use Lonergan's ideal type of the moral counterposition to infer what it means to perform existentially in common sense living without advertence to responsible interiority. Insomuch as one maintains the moral counterposition:

the good is identified with objects of desire while the intelligible good of order and the rational good of value are regarded as so much ideological superstructure that can claim to be good only inasmuch as it furthers the attainment of objects of desire.⁴²

Hence, the subject operating solely by the moral counterposition would only tolerate those theories that equated the good with satisfactions. The good of order and judgments of value are just illusions in service of some kind of ideology. A subject who follows this counterposition would deliberate over and decide to realize only those possible courses of actions that would further the satisfaction of the self. Maintaining the orientation of this counterposition would mean that one is operating in the world as a self-interested or group-interested being who responds to the stimulus of one's environment. In this way, one would rest continually in the current state of her development and maintain a horizon seemingly shaped only by biological and practical concerns.

However, maintaining the moral position or counterposition is unlikely due to the multiple concerns of the subject. We cannot divest ourselves of our biological impulses or self-interest. Yet, we cannot get rid of our intelligence or our concern with living well and caring for others. Due to the nature of consciousness as multiply concerned, Lonergan asserts that living consistently according to the full demands of correct moral theory or its opposite is not an existential possibility. Lonergan asserts,

The fact of the matter would seem to be that men commonly live in some blend or mixture of the artistic, dramatic, and practical patterns of experience, that they tend to the

⁴² LONERGAN, *Insight*, 647.

positions in enouncing their principles and to the counterpositions in living their lives, and that they reveal little inclination to a rigidly consistent adherence to the claims either of pure reason or of pure animality.⁴³

Put simply, the fact of the multiple concerns of consciousness implies that human beings do not always operate intelligently, rationally and responsibly. At times, this is because we are biased. At other times, it is because we have other things to think about and do besides study, apply and test moral theory. We must get things done and eat, sleep, vacuum, decorate and dress ourselves. These things are either expected of us or things we need to do to survive.

However, moral conversion is not a position of theory. Moral conversion is a fundamental option for transformation oriented toward value. The dictates of interiority as expressed in the language of theory are not the same as possessing the interiority. One has to actually continually make value a priority. The decision of moral conversion does not imply a decision to become a theorist. Rather, we all become committed to truth and goodness. How we fulfil this commitment is by asking and answering questions rather than prohibiting the questions or dismissing them as useless.

Ethical abnegation is the opposite of fulfilling the commitment of moral conversion. Ethical abnegation is not the opposite of doing ethics theoretically. One can be an ethical abnegator and an ethical theorist. How? This is achieved simply by refusing or neglecting to follow the immanent dictates of one's responsible consciousness. Moreover, the development of interiority can occur without ethical theory. Consider the many saints and heroes who did not produce or study ethical theory. Definition and logical consistency are not what makes interiority grow. Being attentive to and following through with ethical questions pertaining to value does. But, to give up on ethical questions is a greater challenge to responsible engagement. In the next

⁴³ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 648.

section, we will introduce the problem of liberation with a view to highlight the challenge of despair that can cause us to give up on developing responsible interiority.

4. Moral Impotence and the Problem of Liberation

The commitment of moral conversion is a life-long challenge. Part of the difficulty is confrontation with common sense biases that prevent further questions and biases of concern that orient the subject in directions besides value. But, there is also a further challenge to moral conversion and it is despair over the worth of our moral efforts. This despair can cause us to be unwilling to learn and to grow ethically. In other words, it can cause us to ethically abnegate. The causes of such despair are numerous. But, there is a cause for despair treated by Lonergan that is basic to the very nature of ethical knowing and doing and it is “the problem of liberation.”⁴⁴ That is, we do before we know what we are doing. Thus, we require an open will to learn how to do better. Yet, we may lack an open will and this reinforces the problem. What the problem of liberation means for the morally converted is that we will be perpetually faced with our own inadequacies of moral knowing and willing. We will be confronted by our moral impotence. In this section, we will consider the concept of moral impotence as well as the confrontation with this moral weakness that presents to all of us the problem of liberation. Then we will relate the problem of liberation to the problem of ethical abnegation. We will see that, for Lonergan, ethical theory and interiority are limited in their ability to contend fully with either problem. There is a need to turn to theology and its categories to provide a framework for a solution to the problem of liberation. Hence, we will turn to theology and Lonergan’s notion of religious conversion in the next chapter. Before we make this theological turn, we will

⁴⁴ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 643-646.

summarize the elements of Lonergan's thought that advance our treatment of ethical abnegation thus far.

In *Insight*, moral impotence is a product of the limited range of one's actually possessed effective freedom to execute possible courses of action. For Lonergan, one is more or less effectively free depending on the openness of the dynamic structure of responsible consciousness to grasp, reflectively motivate and execute a greater or lesser range of possible courses of action.⁴⁵ The larger the manifold of possible courses of action that are actually open to the subject to enact, the greater is the freedom to decide or choose what one will do and make of oneself. Decisions and actions are autonomous to a greater or lesser extent depending on the development of one's skills, the knowledge of concrete human situations and their possibilities and the willingness to act and accept responsibility for consequences. In other words, the regular performance of acts of moral self-transcendence is conditioned by the development of one's range of possible courses of action that are available to be effectively carried out.

Lonergan articulates four restrictions that delimit one's full effective freedom: external constraint, one's psychoneural state, as well as limitations in one's intellectual and volitional development.⁴⁶ To begin with, one's external circumstances can prohibit certain courses of action such as when one is imprisoned and cannot decide to walk outside. A subject's psychoneural state can likewise prohibit one from performing certain actions. Thus, one cannot just decide to play the piano. There is need first to develop the habits and sensitive skills through the process of learning how to play the piano. The ability to learn and to adjust one's habits and sensitive skills may be lacking because of neurotic needs that may produce such states as anxiety

⁴⁵ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 643.

⁴⁶ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 645-646.

and obsession that interfere with one's ability to effectively deliberate and make decisions. Dramatic bias can block unwanted images associated with past traumatic events and thereby prevent insights into one's present behaviour and feeling responses. Through psychoanalysis one can begin to appropriate one's present feelings and gain insights into how they relate to past events. Psychoneural development is possible with intellectual and emotional appropriation.

The limitations in one's intellectual and volitional development can be taken together to form an explanation of Lonergan's account of the "problem of liberation." In brief, the problem of liberation refers to the fact that we act before we know how to act and so, we will perpetually make mistakes. At the same time, we do not automatically possess a willingness to learn how to act for the better. In other words, we must strive to possess a willingness to learn all there is to know about acting for the better.⁴⁷

With regard to intellectual development, to increase one's range of practical insights means taking the time to learn about human realities and their possibilities. As soon as one has understood and affirmed some aspect of the human situation, one can almost at will reproduce the knowledge gained and thereby, be able to achieve practical insights more readily. If one does not take the time to learn and gain practical insights, otherwise possible courses of action will be excluded from deliberation.

Moreover, limitations in one's volitional development excludes one from carrying out otherwise possible courses of action.⁴⁸ Possessing antecedent willingness means not having to be persuaded to make a decision. If one lacks the antecedent willingness to make a decision about some possible course of action, then one will be effectively closing off possibilities that would

⁴⁷ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 645-646.

⁴⁸ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 645-646.

otherwise be open to the subject to execute. Like the process of increasing one's practical intelligence, persuading oneself or allowing oneself to be persuaded by others takes time. Even the willingness to actually perform that which is given over as valuable through the process of deliberation and judgment should not be taken for granted. Willingness to do what is acknowledged as the good thing to do can be diminished by the biases of common sense. Thus, one aspect of the problem of liberation is that in the meantime of developing intelligence and willingness, one must make decisions based on incomplete intelligence and imperfect willingness.

Another aspect of the problem of liberation is that development toward full effective freedom has to be won and the key to winning the struggle is to achieve what Lonergan refers to in *Insight* as "universal willingness."⁴⁹ It means being antecedently open to persuade oneself and to submit to the persuasion of others. The point of this persuasion is to allow new insights and rational arguments to modify or correct one's practical knowledge. Reaching universal willingness allows one to become "antecedently willing to learn all there is to be learnt about willing and learning and about the enlargement of one's effective freedom from external constraint and psychoneural interferences."⁵⁰ In this way, the disposition and habits of one who has attained universal willingness includes endeavouring to understand one's sensitive, intellectual and volitional constitution. Insofar as one is open to learning as well as willing to conform that knowing into doing, one's dynamic structure of responsible consciousness will be antecedently more open to grasping, reflectively motivating and executing a broader range of possible courses of action.

⁴⁹ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 645-646.

⁵⁰ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 647.

In *Insight*, it is the figure of the genuine person that provides an ideal type for the kind of openness and willingness needed for sustained development. Lonergan identifies two meanings of genuineness.⁵¹ The first genuineness refers to the honest and simple life of one who has lived without pretense or illusion. The second genuineness also refers to a life of honesty and simplicity, but, these qualities have to be “won back.”⁵² Through self-scrutiny one can expel pretense and illusion in their self-knowledge that in turn creates the conditions for a more successful development process.⁵³ The genuine person is one who endeavours to take control over the direction of their own development by consciously considering the elements and steps needed to advance to ever better ways of living in the world. They scrutinize their feelings, willingness and practical intelligence in order to persuade themselves towards overcoming their present constitution and achieve their goals. If one is not open to persuasion, one will lack the antecedent disposition to be open to learn about their present constitution as well as the steps that move one toward moral self-transcendence. Not to be open to persuasion and rational argument is to remain almost fixed in one’s present constitution. Yet, if one’s willingness to be persuaded and to learn matches the unrestricted dynamism of the detached, disinterested desire to know, then one’s intelligence and the pure desire to know are in control of one’s decisions and actions.⁵⁴

⁵¹ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 499-500.

⁵² LONERGAN, *Insight*, 500.

⁵³ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 502.

⁵⁴ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 647.

4.1. *Implications of Living with Limitations and Impotence*

However, human beings neither live completely according to the dictates of self-transcendence nor self-interested preservation of one's present constitution.⁵⁵ We are a compound in tension. The genuine person is one who can successfully perform creatively and responsibly in the tension between their limited and transcendent impulses.⁵⁶ Moreover, all human living is a developing in this tension. In terms of genetic development, we develop organically to develop psychically and then intelligently, rationally, morally. The higher integrations of human development arise out of a long process of growth and achievement.

Loneragan asserts:

They are the demands of finality upon us before they are realities in us. They are manifested more commonly in aspiration and in dissatisfaction with oneself than in the rounded achievement of complete genuineness, perfect openness, universal willingness.⁵⁷

Thus, the human being's existence is a developing that has its ground in the potential for achievement and growth in understanding, reflection, judgment, decision, and action. We experience the demands of the detached, disinterested desire to know calling us forward to increase our practical intelligence, willingness and openness that requires development toward an as yet unknown form.⁵⁸ We grope towards these indeterminate goals and may respond to them with reticence and anxiety at what they demand of us. Yet, because of this indeterminacy and the anxiety experienced over the unknown aspect of the dynamism that harries us to development, it is often the case that we only consider how we can develop further when suffering through a

⁵⁵ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 648.

⁵⁶ DOORLEY, *The Place of the Heart in Lonergan's Ethics*, 79.

⁵⁷ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 647.

⁵⁸ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 648.

personal or social crisis. More often, the demands of finality are brushed aside only to return in moments of accidental solitude at the end of a busy day.

Awareness of moral impotence can facilitate an acknowledgement of the problem of liberation. We will make mistakes because we act before we know how to act. Yet, awareness of the problem can also lead to a profound despair. The experience of one's moral impotence is a confrontation with weakness, limitations, frailty. This experience may give rise to such assertions as, "I could do more and be more if only this or that condition was fulfilled." These conditions, such as needed skills or knowledge of situations, are perceived by the subject as achievable, yet, underdeveloped and thus, seemingly out of reach. Giving up on ethical inquiry and development appears to be a viable option that moves with the orientation of our moral weakness or an unjust social order and an inability to contend with or improve this order given moral impotence.

Ethical abnegation and despair over injustice and impotence go hand in hand. For Lonergan, the problem of liberation and the despair it causes cannot be addressed on the level of philosophy, even if that philosophy is based on interiority. The human person's own interiority alone set within a horizon closed off to something outside of itself cannot deal with the problem of liberation or the despair that occurs as a consequence. We cannot know all about how to act, but, we can be open and willing to learn. However, despair over our situation can close us off to willingness to learn. The challenge of our moral imperfection and lack of freedom to change this can initiate despair over the worth of our own ethical endeavours. We can begin to expect irresponsibility and disvalue in the social order and work with these facets instead of value and responsibility. In other words, we can come to anticipate irresponsibility and neglect the building up of the potential for responsibility in ourselves and others. In this way, the expectation of

irresponsibility encourages irresponsibility. In giving up on ethical reflection, we can rely on the familiar, the easy or what seems to satisfy us at the moment to guide our practical living. Giving up on ethical reflection can also allow the biases of common sense to prevail. We can perform as though our decisions can only be made based on how it seems like to us according to self or group interests. Hence, despair over the worth of our ethical reflection can initiate an orientation counter to responsibility and reinforce the tendency toward common sense biases. How can the problem of liberation and the moral despair it engenders be addressed if the problem derives from the very nature of our ethical interiority and reflection? Ethical theory cannot address the problem because it will always be based in a subjectivity limited by the problem. This points to Lonergan's turn to theology and its categories to address the problem of liberation. We will discuss Lonergan's stance on religious conversion enabling moral conversion in the next chapter. In the remainder of this section, we will summarize the arguments made for the need to turn to interiority to address the problem of ethical abnegation and connect this to a further need to turn to theology.

4.2. Limitations of Ethical Theory and Interiority to Contend with the Problem of Liberation

In chapters two and three, we discerned within the work of MacIntyre and Taylor a common project to address ethical theory such that it progresses away from fostering emotivist and subjectivist principles that discourage serious ethical reflection. For these authors, preference alone cannot be the basis for ethical reflection and their histories of ethical theory demonstrate that preference is not the only viable option for such a basis. Moreover, insofar as ethical theories declare that preference is the basis, they discourage personal rational reflection about value as well as rational argumentation with others about social goods. In other words, emotivism and subjectivism can encourage ethical abnegation. We noted that there are deeper issues at play in

the problem of ethical abnegation. To identify and address such deeper issues requires a turn to interiority which is a turn that MacIntyre and Taylor's ethical theories do not take in an explicit and thematic way.

Lonergan's work offers this turn to interiority as well as directions for carrying out MacIntyre and Taylor's project. For Lonergan, the basis of ethical theory ought to be ethical interiority. The means to access ethical interiority is through a method of self-appropriation that involves attending to the operations of one's responsible consciousness. From our reading of Lonergan's accounts of the stages of meaning and the biases of common sense, we argued that ethical theory cannot remain fettered to how common sense views ethical reflection. Thus, in chapter four, we identified tensions that arise as a result of conflicts between the stances, languages and concerns of the stages of meaning of theory and common sense. These tensions can issue in a morally troubled consciousness that rejects theory in favour of common sense. Hence, ethical theory ought to turn to the stage of interiority in order to gain clarification on the different stages of meaning as well as the operations and requirements of responsible consciousness.

In this chapter, we analyzed emotivist and subjectivist principles as if they were expressive of biases of the common sense stage of meaning. If one's sole basis of choice regarding courses of action is preference or self-satisfaction, then she is allowing the individual bias of common sense to operate freely in her moral reflections. This bias is the object of focus in the work of MacIntyre and Taylor. However, Lonergan identifies a further bias that can be shown to be operative within subjectivist and emotivist principles and that is the general bias of common sense. The general bias is operative when common sense is taken to be the ultimate or sole means of moral reflection. Common sense relates all objects back to the self in its current

state of development. What is immediately grasped by the self as constituted is the most practical because it can be used immediately. Taking time out for reflection on the operations of responsible consciousness is thus not practical and therefore, it is dismissed as irrelevant. Maintaining the general bias toward common sense knowing discourages a turn to the development of one's ethical interiority for the pursuit of heightening one's ability for ethical reflection. The general bias, in turn, reinforces individual bias in ethical theory. From the standpoint of interiority, the popularity of emotivist and subjectivist principles can be explained beyond their deriving from a narcissistic impulse. They can also be seen as explaining what ethical reflection seems like to the subject operating in the familiar, common sense world of everyday living. Common sense reflection on choice is often based in attaining the familiar satisfactions of the subject-as-one-is. Until ethical theory pays attention to the tensions and biases that derive from the common sense modality, there cannot be an accurate portrayal of the challenges to engaging in serious ethical reflection.

Thus, Lonergan promotes a turn to interiority and offers a method that could be used for the subject's self-appropriation. This method of self-appropriation can encourage a subject's heightened awareness of her own responsible questions and how well she answers them within her ordinary living. It can promote a subject's ability to differentiate between the biases of common sense and her own genuine motivations to do the good. Insofar as one commits to this turn to interiority, she can undergo a transformation of her horizons that augments living in the world in a more responsible way. Moral conversion is this transformation. It entails commitment to ethical questions and the orientation to value in one's living. Moral conversion is a transformation of horizons of living such that a concern for value is paramount in one's choices, judgments, and practical reflections. Practical reflection becomes value reflection. Thus, one

endeavours to choose better courses of action in contribution to a communal order and the betterment of the self for the communal order. However, beyond the biases of common sense, there are also the divergent concerns of experience that orient one's subjectivity and activity in the world. Divergent concerns, besides value, present a challenge to ethical reflection even in the morally converted. We cannot rid ourselves of such concerns that derive from the need to eat, sleep or get things done according to social obligation. Thus, we are incapable of maintaining a value concern such that we are perpetually and purely learning about situations, confronting bias, developing skills and willingness in order to live always in accordance with responsible consciousness.

Divergent concerns besides value are necessary to maintain our survival and thus, divergent concerns are not so much a challenge to overcome in ethical theory as they are something that prevents complete orientation to value. However, these divergent concerns prevent perpetual ethical development which then feeds into the problem of liberation: we do before we know what we are doing. Human beings suffer perpetual moral limitations and this can have devastating consequences on both the personal and the social levels. Reflection on our limitations can lead to a kind of despair over the worth of our ethical reflections and endeavours. Ethical abnegation is a response to such despair and works with the thrust to give up in the face of ethical challenges and imperfection.

For Lonergan, the challenge of liberation can only be addressed by a theological response.⁵⁹ We have noted that moral conversion does not automatically grant the subject all the skills, means, knowledge and willingness to live an utterly self-transcending and authentic life. To live authentically according to the dynamism of consciousness is to live constantly oriented

⁵⁹ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 709-752.

by concerns of truth and value. We have noted the difficulties in maintaining such an orientation in this chapter. There is need of a higher viewpoint beyond limited human knowing and a transformation of the directionality of one's inquiry and willingness to contend with the consequences of the problem. More specifically, there is need of transformative grace that is precipitated by encounters with an unconditional love beyond the bounds of human expectation. Religious love is a powerful force that is capable of augmenting the subject's concerns, orientations and relationship to the world that stems from an actual relationship to the absolute. For Lonergan, religious conversion is a transformation of horizons initiated by God and that involves the subject's acceptance and commitment to religious love in her living. Hence, it allows for the transformation of one's horizons toward absolute truth and goodness. Thus, from a Lonerganian standpoint, the problem of ethical abnegation, of failing to live up to our responsible consciousness, cannot be fully addressed within interiority alone. Lonergan's framework suggests that the analysis of ethical abnegation requires specifically theological categories, which we will address in the following chapter.

Chapter 6

Religious Conversion as Enabling Moral Conversion

In the last chapter, we discussed a variety of challenges to moral engagement. These challenges include the biases of common sense, confusion among stages of meaning, and divergent concerns that orient the subject away from responsible concern. We also discussed moral conversion as an existential commitment to value and to performing according to the dictates of responsible consciousness. However, even for the morally converted subject, there is still the problem of liberation; i.e., we act before we know what we are doing. Human beings are cognizant of their impotence to always know and choose the good. Thus, beyond the problem of liberation, there is reflection on the problem and its consequences in our own and others' irresponsible activities. Our reflection can cause us to despair over the worth of the endeavour to be ethical. Moral despair can lead to abnegating the exercise of our responsible capacities. Without exercising our responsible interiority, we can become committed to satisfactions or just drift between pursuing value and satisfaction without much thoughtful consideration or foresight.

Irrespective of whether one is living according to value or to satisfactions or a combination of both, the resultant difficulty remains confronting what one is to do in the face of the problem of liberation and its consequences. Ethical theories, morally converted interiority, and common sense intelligence cannot depend on their own resources to unfalteringly quell the despair in the face of our moral inadequacies. We can become oriented by moral failure by expecting irresponsibility and decline in the social order. Abnegation of our ethical resources conforms to the expectation of moral failure. For Lonergan, we need to situate the problem of liberation and moral despair within a theological context. This is because the problem can only be addressed by God's grace and our religious conversion. A relationship with God is required to

quell moral despair and satisfy our restless desire for a complete goodness that we cannot achieve due to our limitations. According to the Christian tradition, God is complete goodness and truth who loves us. For Lonergan, to fall in love with God is to be oriented in our cognitive activities and feelings toward complete goodness and truth. This love for God reinforces and enables the commitment to pursue value made in moral conversion.

In this chapter, we will introduce elements in Lonergan's rationale for the turn to theological categories to address the problems of our moral limitations to enable us to pursue value. The first section treats *Insight's* reformulation of the problem of liberation and moral despair within a theological context using the categories of God's grace and sin. We will focus on God's grace mitigating the problem of liberation by addressing the secondary problem of moral despair. Following this, we turn to an introduction of *Method's* account of religious conversion. We characterize this conversion as a transformation of the subject brought about by accepting God's love. Our love for God breaks us out of narrow concerns for the self and reinforces those feelings that respond to the possibility of our performing good actions for others. In the third section, we compare *Insight* and *Method's* treatment of the desire for God and its fulfillment in religious conversion. We will note that the two accounts complement each other. If we are beings in love with God, we are oriented to that which we truly desire and we may seek to be with God through our acts of love, truth and goodness. Thus, religious conversion reinforces and enables concern for value at the root of moral conversion.

In the fourth section, we offer a discussion of perfect charity as an orienting concern. In highly developed religious subjectivity, feelings can point one directly to value. This is a rare state of being. But, loving concern for God and others is possible in one's ordinary living and we can choose to perform specific acts of loving self-transcendence rooted in our love for God.

Thus, we are confronted with the possibility that our loving orientation to God is rooted in one concern among many in our polymorphic consciousness. Given divergent concerns in ordinary living, we may ask how it is possible to maintain the orientation to religious love that enables an openness of horizons that is consonant with and enables moral concern for value. We will address elements of this question in the next two chapters. For now, we are illustrating Lonergan's account of why we need God's grace and religious conversion to contend with the problem of liberation and to enable the commitment to value made in moral conversion.

1. Grace Mitigating Moral Despair in *Insight*

This chapter is concerned with God's grace and religious conversion as enabling a person's responsible engagement. We begin with Lonergan's *Insight* where the problem of liberation is treated first in a philosophical context, but only fully addressed in a theological context. This is because we cannot fix the problem from within the domain of philosophy even if it is based in moral interiority. We cannot become all knowing. However, we can overcome moral despair that results from the problem of liberation. That is, we can become oriented toward God as transcendent and complete goodness and be strengthened in our moral endeavours with the theological gifts made virtues of faith, hope and love.

In chapter eighteen of *Insight*, Lonergan's treatment of ethics culminates in philosophical reflection on the problem of liberation.¹ We are bound to make mistakes because of lack of knowledge or willingness. The result is that we and the social order are constituted by a compound of elements of progress and decline: intelligibility and unintelligibility, rationality and irrationality, responsibility and irresponsibility. Our own failure to change this social situation as well as contending with our moral mistakes leads us to question our freedom to do the good. We

¹ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 643-656.

may consider ourselves morally impotent, unfree and trapped within a life of moral frustration. Insofar as we give up on ethical deliberation in the face of despair we encourage decline through abnegating ethical reflection and thus, make decisions that disregard intelligibility, rationality and responsibility.

In chapter twenty of *Insight* there is a theological reformulation of the problem of giving up on ethical endeavour in the face of despair as a general orientation to sin.² If the basic orientation of consciousness is to know transcendent being, then turning away from this orientation is turning away from God. If we expect decline and moral failure, we are allowing ourselves to be oriented by the expectation of decline and failure. In theological terms, “The reign of sin, then, is the expectation of sin.”³ In concentrating on decline and failure rather than progress and success, we give into sin’s general thrust and work with it rather than toward transcendent being. For Lonergan, grace mitigates the problem of liberation not by erasing it, but by transcending it. The transformation of grace orients us away from the despair that results from the problem of liberation. It orients us toward our proper end in God as complete truth and goodness that encourages acts of knowing and valuing. While despair directs us toward further decline, God’s presence or grace in our lives can foster the habits compatible with maintaining desire and willingness to seek after the good. These are the theological gifts of faith, hope and charity.

Thus, to address despair and abnegation, there is the possibility of acknowledging and accepting in faith the antecedently given generosity, goodness and intelligibility of God.⁴ The theological gifts of faith, hope and charity infuse human intellect and willingness with the habits

² LONERGAN, *Insight*, 709-715.

³ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 715.

⁴ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 716.

necessary to promote sustained development that can be found in the authentic or genuine person.⁵ To love God and one's neighbour promotes a disposition to make decisions and to perform actions that spontaneously regard the interests and concerns of others.⁶ Self-sacrificing love can inspire a dialectical attitude of the will to "return good for evil."⁷ With this kind of disposition one can acknowledge the problem of unintelligibility and evil that culminates in the social surd and respond to that problem with love and prayer for one's enemies and for the evil that might be transformed to goodness. This kind of self-sacrificing love is reminiscent, but not equal to, the love of God that encompasses the order of the universe and is extended to all things. Hope inspires the subject to meet the challenges presented by moral impotence and the social surd with confidence in the potential for the development of goodness. Instead of despairing over the problem of evil and the social surd, hope encourages the subject to use one's intellect to develop an understanding of the elements of potential goodness and growth. This kind of hope infuses one's willingness with the confidence that allows the pure desire to know to reign in one's cognitional operations. For it is based in the "confident hope that God will bring man's intellect to a knowledge, participation, possession of the unrestricted act of understanding."⁸ In this way, the deliberate and habitual orientation of the subject's desire to know is supported by the hope that one will discover and thereby be able to encourage the elements of the intelligible and the good at work in every situation. Thus, confident hope orients one's willingness to go beyond one's already possessed knowledge in order to attain the proper object of intellect, the intelligibility and goodness of God.

⁵ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 750.

⁶ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 720.

⁷ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 721.

⁸ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 724.

In *Insight*, the person of faith is oriented to God and she has the added reinforcement of love and hope in God to deal with moral failure. Still, the problem of liberation cannot be directly fixed for us, but despair and the orientation toward sin can be addressed with a reinforced commitment to ethical deliberation and development. This reinforcement comes from encounters with transcendent being that strengthens one's orientation and resolve toward progress. In theological terms, these kinds of encounters with transcendent being are known as gifts of grace.

2. Religious Conversion Enabling Moral Conversion in *Method*

We turn now to *Method* with the intent to introduce Lonergan's notion of religious conversion as well as its ability to reinforce the commitment to value made in moral conversion. As we saw in the last chapter, the commitment to value made in moral conversion must be continually supported by development of the varying aspects of one's moral subjectivity. This would involve confronting and uprooting one's prejudices or biases. It would mean monitoring and separating intentional responses to the subjectively satisfying and to value. It involves advancing in one's knowledge of human situations and their possibilities. One would be striving to remain open and willing to listen to criticism and to learn from others. In other words, sustaining moral conversion requires a continual commitment to learning and developing one's knowledge of moral living. While religious conversion cannot replace the need for moral conversion and development, it can foster willingness to self-transcend for others by virtue of one's love for God and thereby, enables one's willingness to pursue values over satisfactions.

Religious conversion, like moral conversion, affects subjectivity on the fourth level of consciousness or existential consciousness.⁹ That is, religious conversion transforms how one

⁹ CONN, "Bernard Lonergan's Analysis of Conversion," 387.

deliberates and acts in the world. Unlike moral conversion, religious conversion is not a decision that we can make on our own. It is initiated by God, the transcendent being, who has given us all that we have. Like moral conversion, religious conversion leads to the transformation of the subject's horizons and orientation in the world. This transformation follows upon the subject's passionate love for God and the commitment made to return the love and generosity of God. This passion and commitment has a radical character of "falling-in-love."¹⁰ It is an other-worldly falling-in-love that is existentially known and felt as a self-surrender without conditions or reservations. It is experienced as peace and joy because it is a radical fulfilment of the affective, intellectual and volitional capacities of the human being. We can surrender our preoccupations with the self and with our fleeting desires as we rest in loving union with God. This dynamic state of self-surrender in love is interpreted in the Christian religious tradition as a central gift of God's grace.

Lonergan distinguishes the grace involved in loving God in two of its classic formulations as operative and cooperative grace.¹¹ Operative grace is characterized as God's love flooding our hearts through the Holy Spirit that replaces the figurative heart of stone with the heart of flesh. Cooperative grace proceeds from the heart made flesh to works of generosity that effectively puts the over-flow of love to work for others. Yet, the surrender to God's abundant love is not an act, but rather, a dynamic state that transforms the subject's horizons of concrete living. This transformation is surrender in love that becomes the principle from which all other acts are carried out including "one's feelings, one's thoughts, words, deeds and omissions."¹² In

¹⁰ LONERGAN, *Method*, 240-241.

¹¹ LONERGAN, *Method*, 240-241.

¹² LONERGAN, *Method*, 241.

this way, religious conversion is as much about its practical application in concrete service to others as it is about accepting the love of a generously loving transcendent being.

In this way, religious conversion reinforces the commitment to perform acts of moral self-transcendence for others. One way that being-in-love with God does this is by transforming the subject's affective desire from concern for oneself into a spontaneous concern for others.¹³ Religious conversion is an in-breaking of love that dismantles the walls built around the self that understands itself as isolated individual. "Falling-in-love" is the condition for "being-in-love." Being-in-love with the unconditionally benevolent and generous God in an unrestricted way makes possible the revaluation of what kinds of action are of highest value; e.g., actions that allow loving generosity to others. Thus, the subject who has undergone a religious conversion is loving and not singularly or primarily responsible on the fourth level of consciousness. Hence, responsible deliberation and action can become loving deliberation and action. However, there is a difference between being responsible and being loving.

How do we understand the difference between responsible and loving orientation in the world? Loving deliberation and action unfolds from cooperative grace or being in love with God. That is, deliberation and action are informed by being in love with God rather than the value of self and social projects. This does not mean that one is not valuing others and social projects when he is in love with God. Rather, with religious conversion, one's understanding of originating and terminal values has changed. When one is morally converted without being in love with God, the originating value is the human being and the terminal value is a world populated by valuable projects of living. When one is religiously converted, the originating value

¹³ See: Walter E. CONN, "Affective Conversion: The Transformation of Desire," in *Religion and Culture: Essays in Honor of Bernard Lonergan, S.J.*, ed. Timothy P. Fallon, S.J. and Philip Boo Riley. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 261-276.

is God experienced as love and the terminal value goes beyond the human world toward the building up of God's world. This world is populated by projects of generosity toward others to build up relationships of loving communion with others.

To live in God's world is to be in love with God. In other words, one's existential horizon is concerned with loving God. We can illustrate what this entails if we turn to Lonergan's description of the affectivity fostered in romantic partnership and compare it to the affectivity fostered by being in love with God. This move is justified insofar as Lonergan describes love for God in personal terms analogous to one's love for a romantic partner. Lonergan states:

A man or woman that falls in love is engaged in loving not only when attending to the beloved but at all times. Besides particular acts of loving, there is the prior state of being in love, and that prior state is, as it were, the fount of all one's actions. So mutual love is the intertwining of two lives. It transforms an "I" and "thou" into a "we" so intimate, so secure, so permanent, that each attends, imagines, thinks, plans, feels, speaks, acts in concern for both.¹⁴

In the dynamic state of being in love with God, one acts for the sake of one's relationship with God. In other words, the subject in love with God "attends, imagines, thinks, plans, feels, speaks, acts in concern for"¹⁵ one's relationship with God. God wants us to act out of concern for others beyond constant consideration of the self. In returning God's love, we accept the gift of love and are turned outward to do good for others for the sake of this love. Loving and endeavouring to love one's neighbour becomes a seal of religious conversion.

Lonergan's notion of the prior state of being in love with God as the fount of all one's deliberations and actions is reminiscent of Aquinas' notion of charity. For Aquinas, charity is "the theological virtue by which we love God for God's own sake, above all else, and all others

¹⁴ LONERGAN, *Method*, 32-33.

¹⁵ LONERGAN, *Method*, 32-33.

in God.”¹⁶ However, Aquinas does not use the analogy of romantic partnership. Instead, Aquinas stresses the analogy of friendship with God to explain how charity affects moral living. Referring to Aristotle’s friendship of virtue, we love God by seeking to act like God. Ordinarily, friendships of virtue are maintained by equal persons who enjoy each other’s company and encourage the excellent skills and demeanour of the other. Though we are not equal to God, God loves us to the point of self-sacrifice. God’s love for us reinforces our ability to act like God both in terms of the generosity of God’s love but also in terms of God’s condescension in finite revelation. Through God’s revelation we are instructed on how to act like God. Chiefly, this means loving God and all persons with all one’s mind, heart and soul.

Thus, religious conversion orients one toward love of God and all persons. Conversion, however, is not necessarily a steady or easy achievement. One’s culture may provide one with few or no tools for discerning the operation of grace within oneself and one’s life. Here, there is the additional challenge of discerning and appropriating the transformative experiences of God’s grace without cultural tools. Even for the self-identified religiously converted individual, horizons can be narrowed and oriented toward lesser, more immediate concerns than truth or goodness or even God. In this way, achievements of conversion can breakdown. Because our commitment can waver, the pursuit of a converted life requires intentional reinforcement. The love that one has for God can reinforce the commitment made in moral conversion to the life in pursuit of value. The love we have for God is reinforced in prayer, Church and reading and reflecting on revelation. Still, the subject is prone to development and decline depending on one’s maintenance of the commitment to value, truth, and love for God while meeting the demands of the circumstances of one’s life. We can err and make mistakes. In other words,

¹⁶ William C. III MATTISON, *Introducing Moral Theology: True Happiness and the Virtues*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2008), 291-309.

despite conversion there is still the problem of liberation that instigates despair and ethical abnegation. However, we may continually search for help outside of ourselves and find the loving generosity of God. In returning this love and acting with love for others, we cooperate with God. This cooperation with God can reinforce moral conversion's commitment to self-transcendence in the interest of value.

3. Religious Conversion Enabling Intellectual and Affective Orientation Consonant with Moral Conversion

In the following section, we will compare *Insight* and *Method*'s portrayals of the argument from the basic orientation of consciousness for why we need grace to enable moral commitment. In both works, the desire for God is rooted in the human being's spiritual capacities that seek after truth, goodness and love. God is the fulfillment of those capacities because God is complete truth, goodness and love. But, as Frederick E. Crowe argues, in *Insight*, the desire for God is depicted as intellectual and in *Method*, the desire for God is mainly depicted as affective. Taking these works together, we can conclude that the love we receive and accept from God is a fulfilment of our basic desire for unconditional love, complete truth and total goodness. Thus, grace and religious conversion reinforces concern for value at the root of moral conversion by enabling a concern for God.

In both *Method* and *Insight*, the likelihood of realizing value increases or decreases depending on the extent to which the orientation of the disinterested desire to know and choose the good is dominant in one's horizon. It is possible that one's horizon may be dominated by an orientation toward the unrestricted object of consciousness, God. In *Insight*, God is the source and summit of being or that which is known through grasping all correct insights. In *Method*,

God is also the source of ultimate value or that which is valued and realized as a consequence of achieving the totality of authentic judgments of value, decisions and actions.

Despite the overlap in *Method* and *Insight* regarding the basic orientation of consciousness to God, there are important distinctions in emphasis between the two works. According to Crowe, whereas the Thomistic portrayal of intellectual desire for God is prevalent in *Insight*, the Augustinian affective desire for God is emphasized in *Method*.¹⁷ Crowe sites Lonergan on the difference, “For Augustine our hearts are restless until they rest in God; for Aquinas, not our hearts, but first and most our minds are restless until they rest in [seeing] him.”¹⁸ In *Insight*, Lonergan focuses on the Thomistic understanding that human beings naturally desire to know God. In terms of Lonergan’s account of rational consciousness, our immanent, unrestricted desire to know God is worked out in our constant questioning after truth that can only be satisfied with the truth of transcendent being. Regarding responsible consciousness or “rational self-consciousness” in *Insight*, we are perpetually drawn to seek out the reasonably justifiable good and our wills are restless until we conform our doing to our knowing.

In contrast to *Insight*, *Method* emphasizes the affective fulfilment of the human being in one’s love for God. Crowe argues that the change in emphasis from intellectual to affective desire for God in *Method* is due to Lonergan’s “new notion of value.”¹⁹ Lonergan points out the new notion in “Insight Revisited,” where he states:

In *Insight* the good was the intelligent and reasonable. In *Method* the good is a distinct notion. It is intended in questions for deliberation: Is this worthwhile? Is it truly or only

¹⁷ Frederick E. CROWE, “Lonergan’s New Notion of Value,” in *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, edited by Michael Vertin (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1989), 51-53.

¹⁸ CROWE, 53. Crowe references Lonergan’s *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*. See: Bernard J.F. LONERGAN, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, ed., Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran. (Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 100.

¹⁹ CROWE, “Lonergan’s New Notion of Value,” 51-70.

apparently good? It is aspired to in the intentional response of feeling to values. It is known in judgments of value made by a virtuous or authentic person with a good conscience. It is brought about by deciding and living up to one's decisions. Just as intelligence sublates sense, just as reasonableness sublates intelligence, so deliberation sublates and thereby unifies knowing and feeling.²⁰

Here, Lonergan is asserting the dominant role the notion of value can play in our activities of knowing and feeling. When value is the dominant concern, it harnesses or sublates the subject's knowing and feeling capacities toward achieving value. Thus, for example, one seeks after knowing the truth of situations with the operations of rational consciousness, but, with the end goal to do something about the situation that promotes the good of the situation. When we deliberate over the worth of our courses of action to make a judgment of value, we also draw upon the judgments of facts regarding the situation.

However, it is not a straight-line between facts of situations and the values we seek to enact. Value can also harness our affective dimension and we can experience feelings that orient us toward value over satisfactions. Specifically, there is a certain class of feelings, which Lonergan terms feelings as intentional responses to value. These feelings respond to objects of consciousness that anticipate the possibility of enacting value. It is possible for these value feelings to over-rule feelings as intentional responses to satisfactions. Moreover, feelings as intentional responses to value can also regard objects on a scale of value. This scale refers to vital, social, cultural, personal and religious value. Thus, one's feelings can relate to preferences for higher order values over lower order values. For example, social values can be felt as preferred over vital values. In this way, *Method* emphasizes affectivity as an important source for understanding value theoretically and within interiority.

²⁰ LONERGAN, "Insight Revisited," in *A Second Collection*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 277.

Our affective orientation to value and to God challenges us to consider the essential role of feelings for God as orienting us to value. Lonergan sites Augustine in his discussion on what it means to be affectively oriented to God in making one's judgments of value. Lonergan states, "if one loves God, one may do as one pleases, *Ama Deum et fac quod vis*. Then affectivity is of a single piece."²¹ Here the affective dimension to our perpetual desire for God is fulfilled and one's feelings directly intend value. We will discuss this possibility in greater detail in the following section. For now, we are pointing out that loving God allows for feelings that anticipate the unfolding of responsible consciousness toward value. Insofar as one falls-in-love with God, the subject's horizon is focused on that which is coincident with the object of the fundamental dynamism of consciousness. Becoming a being-in-love with God allows one's orientation to maintain a course toward realizing the good.

Thus, *Insight* and *Method*'s different emphases of the elements involved in responsible consciousness gives way to different explanations and descriptions of how God's grace and religious conversion function to reinforce the commitment to value. The emphasis in *Method* for the need of grace for value commitment is on the transformation of one's affectivity. In *Insight* the emphasis is on the transformation of one's intellectual and volitional capacities to seek to enact value. This does not mean that *Insight* is devoid of references to an affective dimension to the transformations brought about by grace.²² However, when Lonergan discusses the virtue of

²¹ LONERGAN, *Method*, 39.

²² See especially *Insight*, 744-745. "In the twenty-seventh place, though the solution as a higher integration will be implemented principally in man's intellect and will through conjugate forms of faith and hope and charity, it must also penetrate to the sensitive level and envelop it. For, in the main, human consciousness flows in some blend of the dramatic and practical patterns of experience, and as the solution harmoniously continues the actual order of the universe, it can be successful only if it captures man's sensitivity and intersubjectivity. ...since faith gives more truth than understanding comprehends, since hope reinforces the detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know, man's sensitivity needs symbols that unlock its transforming dynamism and bring it into harmony with the vast but impalpable pressures of the pure desire, of hope, and of self-sacrificing charity."

charity in *Insight*, he emphasizes its ability to reinforce one's unrestricted desire to know and the will's capacity for executing plans of action based in reason over-against satisfactions. Taken together, *Insight* and *Method* argue for the need of God's grace and religious conversion to enable an orientation to the source and goal of responsible consciousness. If we are beings in love with God, we are grasped by ultimate concern. Through this concern, we are oriented to that which we truly desire and we seek to be with God through our acts of love, truth and goodness.

4. Charity as an Orienting Concern

In the previous section we noted that, for Lonergan, love for God or charity orients one toward God as complete truth and goodness. Thus, love for God or charity acts as an orienting concern that allows the subject to maintain openness to the world that enables doing the good for others. In *Topics in Education*, Lonergan asserts that charity blends with the practical concern to get things done in such a way that the subject maintains expansive horizons toward truth and goodness. In *Method*, charity acts as one's concern when engaged in responsible consciousness oriented to value. We will discuss the implications of these assertions for ethical engagement. Confusion regarding these assertions could open up the possibility of ethical abnegation in the name of loving God. Thus, we will consider how an affective orientation to God allows for the direct discernment of value through one's feeling states in highly developed religious subjectivity. It will be noted that a religious subjectivity capable of this direct discernment of value is extremely rare. For most of us, we will require the intellectual and reflective acts of responsible consciousness to discern value. However, loving concern for God and others is possible in one's ordinary living and we can perform specific acts of loving self-transcendence rooted in our love for God.

In *Topics in Education*, charity functions like the pure desire to know to free the subject of narrow concerns that pattern experience and determine horizons of knowing and caring.

Lonergan asserts:

The intellectual pattern of experience that corresponds to the universe is beyond any particular horizon. As long as it exists, it is orientated upon totality, upon being, upon everything. But the moment the intellectual pattern of experience ceases to be dominant, then one can shift back to a narrow concern.

...[The] supernatural end correlative to the desire to know is charity. Thus it is by charity that we can move into the practical pattern of experience without contracting our horizon.²³

Whereas the pure desire to know patterns intellectual experience, charity patterns practical experience. In both cases, the object of concern is God and this objective allows us to break out of narrow horizons that limit our capacity for self-transcendence.²⁴ Practical concern that patterns experience is ultimately about getting things done. When practically concerned, intelligence is oriented to meeting the needs of experience as they arise. But, when we are in love with God, our horizon is open to the world beyond practical concern. This is significant for the possibility of ethical engagement even in ordinary living. This is because the practical concern is what ordinarily orients us in our common sense worlds. Here, we are ordinarily in pursuit of getting things done and not with self-transcendence. Moreover, practically concerned common sense is

²³ LONERGAN, *Topics*, 91.

²⁴ The intellectual pattern of experience stems from the pure desire to know or wonder. As long as wonder is the primary concern, the intellectual pattern of experience takes over one's horizon. While in the intellectual pattern of experience, consciousness unfolds toward insight and critical judgment. In other words, wonder's object or end is truth and that is coincident with the basic orientation of rational intentional consciousness. The object of this wonder is never exhausted because it refers to what is to be known; i.e., the universe. Ultimately, what is to be known is grounded in God or the transcendent being on which intelligibility depends. God is the supernatural end of our wonder. In being in love with God, one is purposely directed to the supernatural end. This loving orientation to God is capable of allowing our horizons to remain open to the supernatural end of consciousness even in the practical pattern of experience. Here, the corollary could be made between wonder as the drive coincident with rational intentional consciousness and love as the drive coincident with the basic orientation of responsible intentional consciousness.

prone to the biases of self and group interest. But, to get things done and do so with a view to love others supposes openness to self-transcendence for the sake of others.

Religious loving orients us in a way that is consonant with moral conversion's commitment to self-transcendence over-against self-satisfaction, even in practical living. This is because charity opens us up to horizons where we are concerned for others rather than the self. As Lonergan asserts, "To move into the practical pattern of experience without contracting one's horizon presupposes *perfect* charity."²⁵ That is, charity opens up the subject's willingness to act for the sake of others in ordinary practical living. Thus, with charity, we are not narrowly concerned with self or group interest. We are not concerned with satisfactions but rather we are concerned with the good for others that we can build up in the situation. Charity, then, functions to orient us toward our self-transcendent capacity even in the practical pursuits of ordinary living.

One does not have to be morally converted to love God. We can love others and remain practically oriented to get things done and thus, not be engaged in moral interiority. This opens up many questions about how charity relates to value while one is engaged in practical concern. Is it the case that, as long as one's horizon is concerned with love for God, the practical ends one pursues are coincident with value as the basic orientation of responsible consciousness? If it is the case, then being in love with God transforms one's practical ends to value. Perhaps we would no longer need responsible consciousness if we are in love with God. Does this not promote falling into a kind of ethical abnegation based on a theology of grace? We would no longer need the operations of responsible consciousness. These questions cannot be resolved with reference to *Topics in Education*. Lonergan had yet to develop and integrate the notion of value in his

²⁵ LONERGAN, *Topics*, 91. The emphasis is mine.

framework for ethics. Thus, we turn now to *Method*'s assertions about the connection between love for God and the orientation to value.

Like *Topics*' assertion about "perfect charity" within the practical pattern of experience, *Method* uses the qualifier "complete" in reference to a charity that can function to orient one to value. In *Method*, being-in-love with God takes over one's experience at the fourth level of consciousness, the level of decision with a basic orientation to value.²⁶ Lonergan asserts:

In the measure that one's love of God is complete, then values are whatever one loves, and evils are whatever one hates so that, in Augustine's phrase, if one loves God, one may do as one pleases, *Ama Deum et fac quod vis*. Then affectivity is of a single piece. Further developments only fill out previous achievement. Lapses from grace are rarer and more quickly amended.²⁷

Here, Lonergan is describing the apex of moral development as being in love with God such that one's feelings toward objects point directly either to value or disvalue. This highly developed religious subjectivity simply loves value because "the supreme value is God, and *other values* are God's expression of his love in this world, in its aspirations, and in its goal."²⁸ These "other values" refer to vital, social, cultural and personal values. In everyday dealings with the world, the subject who has reached the summit of religious development chooses to enact plans that promote value for the sake of her love for God.

Robert M. Doran's reading of the "three times of election" within Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* assists our explanation of how perfect or complete charity conditions the possibility of direct apprehension of value given in feeling.²⁹ The three times of election are

²⁶ LONERGAN, *Method*, 115.

²⁷ LONERGAN, *Method*, 39.

²⁸ LONERGAN, *Method*, 39. The emphasis is mine.

²⁹ Robert M. DORAN, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*. (Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 57-58.

taken to refer to three states of inclination that direct us more or less immediately to judgments of value and decision. In the first state of inclination, feelings direct us immediately to correct judgments of value such that there is no need for scrutiny of motivation and no need for further questions. The condition for this first state of inclination is perfect charity. Doran states:

Augustine's 'Love God, and do what you will' is speaking of a condition in which one's affectivity is so refined and integrated that one's apprehension of values in feelings can be trusted as a criterion for right action.³⁰

We are speaking of a subjectivity that has achieved a full integration of affectivity within the machinations of the cognitive operations and in particular as they relate to value preferences. This is possible insofar as the person is perpetually in the state of being in love with God. Both Lonergan and Doran are quick to point out that this state of development is extremely rare.

The process of full affective development can be understood in light of Doran's reading of the second and third times of election as states of feelings in response to possible values. Unlike the first time of election, in the second and third there are further questions regarding the course of action to be undertaken and one's feelings do not immediately point to value. The second time of election is marked by conflict between inclinations. When feelings about courses of action conflict, we must be able to step back and scrutinize them. Lonergan posits that feelings arise as intentional responses to the possible attainment of satisfactions and values. These feelings are more or less present to awareness. Conflicts of feelings as intentional responses to plans of action derive either from conflicts among values or conflicts between value and satisfactions. When one makes a judgment of value, one imagines doing something that allows one to en-feel the possibility of doing something that benefits the orientation and development of the self or of the community. There is a kind of excitation toward the possibility of moral self-

³⁰DORAN, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 57.

transcendence. In the process of making a judgment of value, feeling conflicts most often relate to plans of action that will lead to satisfactions over-against values. If one makes a decision to enact a satisfaction over-against a value, they are closing off the possibility of self-transcendence and growth. This involves shutting down one's affective development insofar as one is choosing to reinforce their inclinations toward satisfactions over-against values. One can see how regularly opting for value over-against satisfactions can increase one's capacity to discern the difference between feelings as intentional responses to values from satisfactions.

In the third time of election, there are no strong inclinations for making judgments of value or decisions. Without apprehensions of values given in feelings or inclinations toward satisfactions, "our process of deliberation is to be one of a rational weighing of the cons and pros of the various alternatives."³¹ Such rational consideration may seem ideal for making judgments of value, but to remain in a state where one never has any inclinations to satisfactions or values is to cut oneself off from a large aspect of human living. For Lonergan, feelings play a tremendous role in the subject's living as "they are the mass and momentum and power of his conscious living, the actuation of his affective capacities, dispositions, habits, the effective orientation of his being."³² That is, besides inclinations to satisfactions and values, we also feel our participation in other operations of consciousness. With insight we can note feelings of clarity and release and with judgments of truth we can notice feelings of certainty and satisfaction. We may also feel sadness or even anger at lack of insight or attainment of truth. Our feelings can also drive us away from insight toward the avoidance of truths. In this way, feelings are an active participant or detractor in one's pursuit of truth, goodness, intelligibility and loving union. All

³¹ DORAN, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 58.

³² LONERGAN, *Method*, 65.

feelings can act as motivation for truth and goodness if situated in a fully developed human being that is continuously in the dynamic state of a being in love with God.

Conclusion: Religious Conversion and Addressing Ethical Abnegation

We conclude the chapter with a summary of the positions presented and their relationship to the overarching concern of this project: addressing ethical abnegation within ethical theory for the sake of encouraging ethical reflection. The analysis in this chapter focused on Lonergan's suggestion that religious conversion enables the commitment to value made in moral conversion. As such, it is the most effective means for sustained transformations of the moral habits of the subject and society. In section one, we turned to *Insight*'s theological formulation of the problem of liberation and moral despair. We offered that grace can transform and orient the subject toward faith, love and hope in God. By virtue of these theological gifts, one can overcome the moral despair that arises from reflection on moral impotence and the problem of liberation. When we turned to *Method* in section two, we saw that religious conversion is an alteration of the orientation of the human being toward goodness because they are in love with God as absolute goodness. In the third section, we outlined the difference between Lonergan's *Insight* and *Method* when it comes to the depiction of our desire for and fulfillment in God. We noted a complementarity of the emphases. *Insight*'s treatment of grace as a response to the problem of liberation and despair can be characterised as an argument for grace-filled love enabling moral conversion. When one is gracefully working with God and religiously converted, it is one's faith, love and hope in God that orients one to do the good.

Which element of responsible consciousness is being reinforced by the love of and orientation to God? Whether in reference to *Insight* or *Method*, grace can reinforce all elements of interiority toward living out the commitment to value. For Lonergan, we need grace and

religious conversion because of our inability to perpetually fulfil the requirements of responsible consciousness. *Insight* argues for this from an argument of the proper intellectual orientation to God but emphasizes the need to address moral failure more than *Method* does. However, *Method* fills out the proper orientation of the spirit with emphasis on the affective dimension of the transformation of one's interiority. Taking the works together, grace reinforces the affective, intellectual and volitional capacities for enacting value through a transformation that can sustain the subject's orientations toward the proper object of responsible intentional consciousness, God as complete goodness.

Thus, for Lonergan, the turn to theological categories is necessary to address the problem of liberation and the moral despair that can lead to ethical abnegation. This is because God is coincident with the proper objects of intentional consciousness that includes truth, being and goodness. Insofar as one is oriented by love of God, she is antecedently open to caring for the world as expressive of God's being, truth and goodness. This leads to another dimension of Lonergan's work that can advance MacIntyre and Taylor's project of challenging ethical theory to discourage self-centred modes of ethical reflection. While MacIntyre and Taylor are not closed to the horizon of theology, they do not engage theological categories within their ethical theory. This limits their explanations of the challenge posed by self-centred principles in ethical theory. Emotivist and subjectivist principles are not just counter-rational, they run contrary to our deeper desires and greatest fulfillment. We do not ultimately desire the fulfilment of preference, but the fulfilment of an unconditionally loving relationship. Consequently, MacIntyre and Taylor's directions for the way forward from self-centred modes of moral reflection lack an adequate accounting of the motivations for going beyond self-interest. The solution to the problem of liberation as well as the proper ordering and motivation for desire is a religious

conversion. For Lonergan, the solution to the problem of ethical abnegation is an existential reorganization of the human being's horizons and subjectivity toward love of complete truth and goodness, God.

In the last chapter, we identified the problem of liberation as initiating a kind of despair that fosters ethical abnegation. Lonergan asserts that this despair and the solution to the problem of liberation can only be addressed by grace and the love of God. To counter moral despair, we need hope, love and faith in God to foster an openness and willingness to do the good for the sake of others and ourselves. Through our love of God, an orientation toward absolute goodness and truth is fostered. This allows an orientation beyond narrow concerns of self-interest and practically getting things done. Grace and being grasped by loving concern for God liberates us from obsessive self-interest and practical scheming toward our proper orientation to seek after the good. This liberation toward our proper orientation to God as complete goodness is significant to our discussion of ethical abnegation. Concern with value allows the subject to overcome the biases that prevent ethical reflection. In previous chapters, we identified these biases as individual and group bias as well as the general bias of common sense. For Lonergan, religious love mitigates self and group interest even within the common sense stage of meaning. This is because we are concerned for others and the good for all by virtue of our love for God.

But, how do we maintain this orientation to love all else in God? We have spoken about the ideal type of the genuine person and the perfectly charitable person. The genuine person, as morally converted, is committed to reflection and decisions based on value over-against satisfactions. In the last chapter, we noted that even the morally converted person has to contend with and differentiate among concerns and the patterns of experience they engender. This is because divergent concerns aside from the ethical can derail us from being concerned with value.

In this chapter, we spoke about the perfectly charitable person as constantly being directed toward value even when she is engaged in practical concern out of her love for God. Yet, for most of us, perfectly charitable subjectivity is difficult to achieve and maintain. It is unlikely for one to maintain a value or a loving orientation considering the biases of common sense and the human being's polymorphic consciousness. We are divergently concerned and this is required to function. But, the practical concern to acquire the demands of experience can take over our intelligent reflection. We can be practically concerned in such a way that we are unlikely to engage in reflection outside of our common sense worlds. It would seem that ordinary living is not conducive to achieving perfect charity or maintaining the comportment of a genuine person. Such presentations of ideal types can actually lead to the rejection of the possibility of the solution to the problem of ethical abnegation. We may ask, "Why bother trying to be loving and responsible if I cannot be perfect?" Giving up on the endeavour to love perfectly and to engage in moral reflection is to engage in the thrust of abnegating our ethical capacities. How do we integrate loving concern and commitment to love and value in amongst our daily routines which are oriented by varying and divergent concerns? Shall we all become religious clerics or members of holy orders? What is an "ordinary person" to do?

In the next chapter, we will explore Lonergan's account of ordinary experience through an analysis of the dramatic pattern of experience. It is a withdrawal from the line of argument regarding ethical abnegation to pursue a richer understanding of ordinary experience. The analysis will provide an account of dramatic experience that will allow for more precision in the discussion of what it means to maintain orientations of love and value concerns in daily experience. We will note that immanent in ordinary living is a particular modality of experience that Lonergan refers to as the dramatic pattern of experience. This type of experience relates the

subject to imagining possibilities of collaborative activity. An analysis of the dramatic pattern of experience's source, concern and terminal activity in chapter seven will set the stage for chapter eight's exploration of dramatic experience in relation to value and religious love. In chapter eight, we will explore the possibility that this type of ordinary experience is capable of working with value concerns as well as religious love. Notably, I will contend that religious love as situated in the dramatic pattern of experience allows for the felt and imaged participation in God's world. The salient point to be made in connection with the challenge of ethical abnegation is that religious love allows for imaging and feeling dramatic possibilities of collaboration that are motivated by concern to love others even in the common sense stage of meaning. That is, there is the possibility that one's dramatic artistry can elicit a felt moral thrust of self-transcendence for the sake of others by virtue of one's love for God. Thus, the next chapter sets up the foundation for a partial explanation of what it mean to be living one's ordinary existence with the necessity of divergent concerns and at the same time, striving to love God and pursue value.

Chapter 7

The Dramatic Pattern of Experience: Examining Ordinary Life in Light of Insights from the Third Stage of Meaning

In chapters five and six, we referred to Lonergan's notions of moral conversion, religious conversion and perfect charity. These notions act as ideal types of moral development. It is typical of philosophies and theologies to theorize about the nature of being ethical by providing accounts of the ideal of ethical development, but these accounts and ideals are often criticized for falling short of explaining how they relate to ordinary experience or daily practice. The differences between theory and practice or high ideals and daily living can be used to justify turning away from ethical theory or from learning how to be ethical. But, what do such critiques mean by "ordinary experience" and "daily practice"? In this chapter, we are analysing Lonergan's account of the dramatic pattern of experience to establish it as a distinct mode of experience of the world separate from other patterns and as a withdrawal from one's ordinary blended experience in the common sense world-in-relation-to-me.

It will be demonstrated that, for Lonergan, experience operates according to different concerns that give rise to distinct modes or patterns of experiencing. In ordinary experience, concerns blend according to the habits of interest of the subject. These blended concerns give rise to the ordinary blends of experience. In the common sense world, this blend of experience often has a notable practical thrust. This is because common sense seeks to practically meet the demands of the concerns of experience as they arise. Thus, the ordinary blend of experience is often predominated by a practical concern to get things done. However, one can discern, within the ordinary blend of experience, a dramatic concern that is operative and can be picked out from the blend. The account of the dramatic pattern of experience offers a means for the subject to

identify it in interiority as a recurrent feature of ordinary experience. This identification will prove helpful in advancing the project of encouraging ethical reflection and engagement. In particular, it will be demonstrated, in the next chapter, how the concerns of moral and religious conversion could be integrated and lived out through the dramatic pattern of experience in ordinary living.

In this chapter, we will offer an analysis of the distinctive features of the dramatic pattern of experience with a particular interest in demonstrating that it is not the same as ordinary, blended experience. Like other distinct patterns of experience, the dramatic pattern has its own concern and terminal activity. In this pattern, we are absorbed in dramatic concern for action in collaboration with others and pursue its terminal activity of imagining dramatic possibilities of action, interaction, character and role.

To elaborate our argument, we must engage in the prior work of establishing the unique characteristics of particular patterns of experience that condition the operations of intelligence in distinct stages of meaning and modes of reflection. Recent Lonergan scholarship has turned to analyses of the patterns of experience as a means to build bridges of communication between diverse standpoints and modes of meaning within the fields of philosophy and theology.¹ The analysis of the place and characteristics of the dramatic pattern of experience in this chapter is intended to set down some key foundational insights from which one can build bridges of communication in theological ethics.

Among these foundational insights one can note the freedom of consciousness itself to select the concern that patterns experience, which alters our relationship to the world. One of the

¹Mark D. MORELLI, *Self-Possession: Being at Home in Conscious Performance*. (Chestnut Hill, MA: Lonergan Institute at Boston College, 2015). James R. PAMBRUN, "Conflict in Current Roman Catholic Systematic Theology: A Diagnosis and Response" *Theological Studies* 76, no. 3 (2015): 423-447. Gerard WALMSLEY, *Lonergan on Philosophical Pluralism: the Polymorphism of Consciousness as the Key to Philosophy*. (Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

concerns that the subject operating in the “ordinary,” common sense world-in-relation-to-me can select is the dramatic whereby one withdraws from the blend of common sense to focus on characteristic features of the dramatic pattern as it operates within ordinary experience. In this way, the analysis will aid in the precision with which one discusses “ordinary experience” and experience in relation to imagining possibilities for ordinary and ethical action.

This chapter consists of two major steps. In the first part, we shall clarify the meaning of the term “pattern of experience” as a distinct modality of interiority’s operation. We situate the patterns of experience in Lonergan’s analysis of interiority as operative on the level of empirical consciousness, which is the first of four levels of consciousness. We shall discuss the nature of a pattern of experience as involving i) a distinct concern that selects one’s world of experience; ii) a distinct horizon; iii) a distinct control of intelligence; iv) a distinct navigation of horizons; v) a distinct focus on freedom.

When operating in a distinct pattern of experience, the subject’s concern toward the world invites different operations of consciousness to come to the fore to complete its terminal activity. A comparison between the biological and intellectual patterns of experience will bring these points together and allow us examples of the way consciousness unfolds from different patterns of experience. Consequently, this section will also provide a distinction between experience operating in distinct patterns of experience and ordinary experience blending such patterns in the common sense world-in-relation-to-me.

In chapter 4, we introduced the common sense stage of meaning where we are the centre of reference and all understanding is related back to a common fund of practically tested answers. Here, we are also referring to the common sense world but as oriented by habitual blends of concern that function to reduce experience to the familiar and the ordinary, which

provide a stable setting for our habitual performance. These habitual blends of concern that give rise to ordinary experience also limit questioning that could expand our horizons of knowing and caring beyond the familiar to us. Moreover, these familiar concerns and experiences can become so habitual for the subject that it can seem as though she is not choosing to be concerned with anything. It can seem that experience only happens to us rather than us choosing to be concerned to have those experiences. In the common sense world, it appears as though experience is determined solely by outside forces. Yet, we can withdraw from our common sense world through a selection of concern that patterns experience toward different specialized worlds and the attainment of unique terminal activities.

In the second part of this chapter, we will articulate the nature of the withdrawal into the dramatic pattern of experience from ordinary experience in light of its distinctive terminal activity in consciousness. We will propose that dramatic experience is the kind of experience that anticipates ethical understanding and reflection in the common sense stage of meaning. The intent in this part of the chapter is to articulate how the selection of concern that patterns experience establishes our relationship to the world and that through the selection of concern we have a freedom to withdraw to specific patterns of experience that relates us to different experience and terminal activities that can expand our horizons of knowing.

In the next chapter, we will explore the possibility of differentiated dramatic experience forming the basis of ethical imagination in both the common sense and interiority stages of meaning. However, depending on the stage of meaning one is in and one's feeling state as well as whether one is morally or religiously converted, the imaginative capacities of the dramatic pattern of experience are harnessed for different terminal activities at the level of intelligence and reflection.

1. Ordinary Experience and Patterns of Experience

1.1. Experience and Levels of Consciousness

Experience and its patterns can be situated most generally within Lonergan's account of the cognitional order presented as four levels of consciousness (experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding) in *Method*.² Experience at this first level of consciousness, the empirical level of consciousness, has its own directionality and its end is attentiveness to data. In terms of the contents of the flow of empirical consciousness, there are images, feelings, sensations, memories, movements as well as past insights, judgments, decisions. That is, we can experience data from a variety of levels of our subjectivity. This includes experience of acts of cognition such as curiosity, insight and decision that makes transcendental method or the appropriation of interiority's operations possible.

Experience is operative in every further act of consciousness. Each of Lonergan's four levels of consciousness has a proportionate end that serves as the basis for self-transcendence to a higher level of consciousness.³ We self-transcend when we go beyond our present horizons of knowing and caring. The exception is the self-transcendence achieved by going beyond the fourth level of consciousness. Its self-transcendence is not cognitional nor horizontal but actual. One acts out the decision based on a judgment of value. Whether cognitional or actual, each act of self-transcendence relies on the subject's achievement of the proportionate end of the lower levels. The goal of empirical consciousness is observation of the data of consciousness and of sense gained through openness to the data. The goal of intelligent consciousness is intelligibility

² I refer readers to the debate about a fifth level of consciousness present in Lonergan's work. See: Patrick H. BYRNE, "Consciousness: Levels, Sublations, and the Subject as Subject," in *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 13 (1995) 131-150. Michael VERTIN, "Lonergan on Consciousness: Is There a Fifth Level?," in *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 12 (1994) 1-36.

³ DORAN, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 46-49.

gained through insight into the data. The goal of rational consciousness is truth gained through critical assessment of the evidence. The goal of responsible consciousness is the good attained through critical assessment of the data of the situation as well as evaluation of the motives for plans of action toward the situation.

All acts of self-transcendence, from meaning to truth to value, depend on and augment the flow of the contents of the empirical level of consciousness. But, it is intelligence in particular that augments the flow with wonder at the data. Intelligence discovers within the flow of sensitive experience a pattern. Pattern, here, is meant as “a set of intelligible relations that link together sequences of sensations, memories, images, conations, emotions, and bodily movements.”⁴ The pattern sparks wonder and intelligence seeks meaning in the pattern of presentations. Intelligence discerns a concern or a demand originating from different levels of the subject. What patterns the presentations is a concern “immanent in experience, a factor variously named conation, interest, attention, purpose.”⁵ These concerns that pattern experience and that originate from differing levels of the subject also direct experience and intelligence toward differing terminal activities. Thus, we perform different activities of consciousness depending on whether the concern arises from the psyche or our biology, from our intelligence or our judgment, from our responsibility or even of our experience itself.

1.2. The Notion of Concern

The notion of concern offers a partial explanation of why our experience is not experience of everything. We experience that which holds our attention. One could say that another aspect that narrows experience is our physical limitations. We cannot see what is not

⁴ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 206.

⁵ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 205.

present to our senses. But, one does not need to physically see the back of the room to bring it into her attention. Navigating our attention to the back of the room is to introduce it into the flow of our experience, yet, one does not have to turn her head and physically see it to do so. One can turn his attention to his left leg as an anatomical component of his biological and sensory constituency. For example, if one's left leg started to ache, then the biological concern would demand consciousness to be attentive to experience of one's left leg. Experience, then, involves a selection of attention. Lonergan states, "There are all sorts of impressions made upon our sensitive apparatus, our sense organs, but not all of them get into consciousness. It is what you are interested in that gets into consciousness. Consciousness selects; it floats upon the series of demands for attention."⁶ Once in one's awareness, intelligence reinforces the orientation of concern with questions and reflections.

1.3. The Role of Intelligence

Insofar as the concerns at the empirical level become questions for intelligence, the flow of data in sensitive experience is further organized toward a specific direction. In this way, concerns at the level of experience are picked out by intelligence to be questioned for understanding. Concern can be experienced in the stage of interiority as a question that directs the flow of consciousness. One can ignore certain elements and concerns in the data of experience and not ask questions. For example, the urgency of the biological need to eat is more or less present to one's attention. While it might be operative at the biological level, one does not necessarily have to attend to it. One can keep on working or having a conversation. This does not mean that the hunger is not present, but rather, it is not present to our attention. Other concerns are operative and calling for attention. Moreover, intelligence can ignore certain aspects within

⁶ LONERGAN, *Topics*, 84.

the functioning of the whole person and be concerned with other activities that direct experience elsewhere. As intelligence can ignore elements in the empirical flow of consciousness, it can also posit aspects in the data that are not there. This is why rational consciousness needs to verify data. It is also why openness to observation of data itself at the level of experience is essential too.

Central to the selection of the images, feelings, movements, memories, and representations that enter into consciousness is the control of intelligence and its questions. But, it is not only intelligence that selects and prunes images and representation for insight and reflection. The psychic dimension of the person operates as a censor to the flow of experience. Lonergan discusses the constructive and repressive role of the psychic censor.⁷ In its constructive role, the censor selects and allows images and associated feelings to enter the experiential flow for insight. In its repressive role, the censorship represses relevant images for insight and this can produce a “dramatic bias.” Dramatic bias operates to suppress images and memories because they are attached to painful feelings and/or traumatic events. One suppresses images and memories and still the painful feelings remain while they are attached to objects in the data of experience. Thus, one can have an aversion to or fear of certain things or types of situation such that it augments living in the world. Instead of confronting the source of the original negative feelings by allowing its images and memories to enter into consciousness, one flees from the source as well as that which reminds them of the source. Hence, it is a bias because one is fleeing from insight. It is dramatic because it affects the way that one lives his or her life with others. Lonergan posits that if one can allow into empirical consciousness images and memories of the

⁷ I refer the reader to Robert M. Doran’s notion of psychic conversion and his study of the psyche and its role in Lonergan’s thought. See, DORAN, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 42-63. DORAN, *Subject and Psyche*. 2nd revised edition. (Milwaukee: Marquette University, 1993). DORAN, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations: Towards a Reorientation of the Human Sciences*. (Chico: Scholars, 1981).

original source of the negative feelings, then one can have insights into the source of the dramatic bias and eventually achieve relief.

Thus, the empirical level of consciousness acts as a mediator between the intellectual, the reflective, and the responsible levels of consciousness and the demands, feelings and images deriving from our psycho-neural processes, our biology, our environment. Thus, the empirical level of consciousness dynamically relates data to our operations of cognition that grant us access to meaning, value and love. Consequently, we can find meaning in our feelings as responses to physical experience, insights, judgments or values.⁸ And our feelings grant “mass and momentum” to the activities of cognitional operation. We can also find meaning and value in our biological drives and our environment as well as have feelings about them and toward them. Moreover, operative within the mixture of feelings, images and demands within the empirical flow are past insights and judgments. Thus, for example, we do not need to reproduce the process of a judgment every time we express a statement. We remember the judgment when it is operative in the flow of consciousness and express it in a statement.

1.4. The Significance of Horizons

Concerns of experience and intelligence are what hold our attention as we navigate through life performing various activities. Not only does concern pattern the subject’s experiential flow and prompt questions of intelligence, it also “defines the horizon of his world.”⁹ By horizon is meant what one cares about and knows about. At the edge of these horizons are what we could know about or care about if we asked further questions. What one pays attention to and the quality of this attention conditions the occurrence of further questions

⁸ DORAN, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 46.

⁹ LONERGAN, *Topics*, 210. See also, *Topics*, 56, 84-85.

that could expand one's horizons. To transcend one's horizon is to engage in a specific pattern of experience with its own concern and to allow it to unfold toward its terminal activity. Specific acts of self-transcending our present horizons can occur throughout the day. For example, if we enter into the intellectual pattern of experience, we can allow it to unfold toward its terminal activity through understanding, reflection and judgment. One can, for example, get to the truth of some matter and so allow this new judgment into one's horizon as a fact. The reorganization of one's horizon can occur through conversion where one makes a commitment to truth, value, and love. Thus, one is committed to self-transcending her horizons and so to asking questions, reflecting, and maintaining a willingness to perform beyond one's present state of development. However, this requires a willingness of the subject to move out of the familiar experiences and understanding of one's world to engage in new experiences and insights.

For Lonergan, the everyday world is lived in the common sense stage of meaning. Its horizon of concern and knowledge forms the world of familiar objects, people, and situations in their relation to one's individual person. One's private or common sense world is not the entire world, but the aspects of the universe to which we pay habitual attention; i.e., the concerns of the subject in the common sense world-in-relation-to-me according to one's present development.

Lonergan asserts:

Within one's horizon, one's ready-made world, one is organized, one has determinate modes of living, feeling, thinking, judging, desiring, fearing, willing, deliberating, choosing. But to move beyond one's horizon in any but the most casual and insignificant fashion calls for a reorganization of the subject, a reorganization of his modes of living, feeling, thinking, judging, desiring, fearing, willing, deliberating, choosing. Against such reorganization of the patterns of the subject, there come into play all the conservative forces that give our lives their continuity and their coherence. The subject's fundamental anxiety, his deepest dread, is the collapse of himself and his world. Tampering with the organization of himself, reorganizing himself, gives rise to such a dread.¹⁰

¹⁰ LONERGAN, *Topics*, 90.

One's ready-made world is the generic common sense world-in-relation-to-me that one carries throughout life because it is a manifestation of one's present state of development. Through our intersubjectivity, this common sense world is populated by other people with whom we are familiar (a *Mitwelt*).¹¹ This world is set within a series of artifacts or tools of navigation such as buildings and sidewalks (an *Umwelt*).¹² There are subdivisions of one's generic common sense world-in-relation-to-me. These more discrete worlds of common sense are sectioned off according to familiar blends of concerns in relation to types of activities, familiar persons and artifacts.¹³ These are the worlds of institutions, of one's profession and home life or the worlds of education or religious affiliation. Here concerns blend in their own unique way. Thus, for example, in one's professional world the practical concern operates such that one gets things done and the intellectual concern is set upon narrowly defined problems that assume training and knowledge in some discipline.

Another way to understand one's common sense world-in-relation-to-me is as one's default horizon when one is not operating according to a particular concern that patterns experience and engages intelligence. One's habitual blend of operative concerns gives way to the humdrum of daily living. In the common sense world of our current development, our concerns ordinarily shift according to external circumstance and habits. This gives us the impression of a limited freedom to direct consciousness beyond outside stimulus and habitual tendencies. Like all habits, habitual concerns are conservative forces that make living easier. We use less energy and force this way. However, habitual concerns can also be a source of entrapment that limits our freedom. In lacking concern for intellectual or artistic pursuit, for example, we are closing

¹¹ LONERGAN, *Topics*, 210.

¹² LONERGAN, *Topics*, 210.

¹³ LONERGAN, *Topics*, 84.

ourselves off to insights, understanding, and possible behavioural change. Our concerns screen out and select sensations, memories and images. At times, human consciousness seems to act like a self-regulating machine that unfolds in a sequence determined by things outside of our control. The question arises as to the freedom we have in orienting ourselves in our worlds. Do we orient ourselves?

1.5. Freedom and our Orientations through Horizons

Contained in Lonergan's reflections on freedom is the idea that consciousness can unfold as we choose it. Lonergan states:

Normally, we think of freedom as freedom of the will, as something that happens within consciousness. But the freedom of the will is a control over the orientation of the flow of consciousness, and that flow is not determined either by environment, external objects, or by the neurobiological demands of the subject. It has its own free component.¹⁴

For Lonergan, freedom is exercised before we even experience external circumstance and our habitual concerns. We have seen that we can be committed to the pursuit of value if we are morally converted. The religiously converted person is concerned with loving God and by extension each other. We have yet to discuss the option of actively and consciously choosing our orienting concerns that pattern experience and select our horizons. This requires a return to the realm of interiority to seek further differentiations regarding the concerns that pattern experience. We can understand these differences implicitly. We do not go to a classroom expecting to be entertained and drawn into the lecture as if we are watching a movie. We do not analyze movies as if we had to follow logical demonstration and understand such that we could reproduce this understanding in an exam. Our concerns are different in the classroom than in the movie theatre. These concerns can be differentiated or picked out from the blend of concerns that pattern the flow of experiential consciousness in our ordinary living in our common sense worlds.

¹⁴ LONERGAN, *Topics*, 232.

One of Lonergan's key metaphors for the process of differentiating patterns of experience is "withdrawal for a return."¹⁵ In *Topics*, he asserts that operating within a specific pattern of experience is to withdraw from the concrete functioning of the whole person.¹⁶ Lonergan asserts:

It is a withdrawal from total activity, total actuation, for the sake of a fuller actuation when one returns. What one returns to is the concrete functioning of the whole. In that concrete functioning there is an organic interrelation and interdependence of the parts of the subject with respect to the whole, and of the individual subject with respect to the historically changing group.¹⁷

By concrete functioning of the whole, Lonergan means one's actual performance of activities. That is, the actual experiences, insights, judgments, decisions and actions that occur as a result of one's present state of development. The main reason for the withdrawal from concrete functioning in life and into a specific pattern of experience is for the sake of returning to this living afresh with new experiences that lead to new insights, judgments, or perspectives. Most often, this concrete functioning occurs in the common sense world-in-relation-to-me where concerns and patterns of experience blend. Therefore, we are most often withdrawing into a particular pattern of experience from the common sense world.

We have seen that the common sense stage of meaning is often predominated by a limited practical intelligence. It is limited because it seeks to understand and relate the things of the subject's world to what is immediately relevant to meeting the demands of the present situation. The demands of the present situation are presented to the subject in the flow of conscious experience. There are always varying demands that call for attention at the level of experience. What we are attentive to in experience is the relatively self-determined selection of a demand arising from varying levels of the subject. These more or less self-determinedly selected

¹⁵ LONERGAN, *Topics*, 209.

¹⁶ LONERGAN, *Topics*, 208-210.

¹⁷ LONERGAN, *Topics*, 209.

demands are the concerns that pattern experience and call for different modes of intelligent operation. In the common sense stage of meaning, we seemingly meet the demands of experience as they arise. There are demands of biology, psychology, artistry, the dramatic, inter-subjectivity, value, intelligence, religion. The mixture of demands calls forth an intelligence that is practical because what are needed are plans that meet the varying demands. In the common sense stage of meaning, ordinary experience unfolds toward meeting a blend of concerns determined relevant or pressing by practical intelligence.

Insofar as consciousness withdraws into a specific pattern of experience, consciousness moves into a specialized world that is not dominated by practical intelligence. This does not mean that the subject has moved out of the common sense world-in-relation-to-me. In Lonergan's account of the common sense subject, demands arising from different levels of one's subjectivity give rise to different patterns of experience within one's common sense world. Throughout Lonergan's work, he privileges the intellectual pattern of experience as being uniquely capable of orienting the subject toward transcending the common sense world and entering into the universe of being to be known and, later, to be valued. Here, other demands of one's subjectivity are screened out and the intellectual concern is taken up and patterns of experience to give rise to a specialized horizon apart from one's common sense world-in-relation-to-me.

1.6. Horizons and the Patterns of Experience

To speak of the more specialized world of the intellectual concern versus the concerns that often pattern one's common sense world, we can compare the biological and intellectual patterns of experience as they unfold toward more or less open horizons. Lonergan states:

Such, then, is the height of the tension of human consciousness. On the side of the object, it is the opposition between the world of sense of man the animal and, on the other hand,

the universe of being to be known by intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation. On the side of the subject, it is the opposition between a center in the world of sense operating self-centeredly and, on the other hand, an entry into an intelligibly ordered universe of being to which one can belong, and in which one can function, only through detachment and disinterestedness.¹⁸

In the biological pattern of experience, what we sense of our embodiment and surroundings at the empirical level of consciousness becomes the concern that defines our world. We, as our physiological organism, are the centre of reference. We react to this world by performing activities that ensure our survival in it. These activities ultimately lead toward reproduction or self-preservation. Here, intelligence is operating in the common sense stage of meaning. It is concerned to create practical plans of action to complete the tasks of self-preservation. By contrast, when engaged in the intellectual pattern of experience, we are no longer the centre of reference and our sensory input and abilities are only one factor in our terminal pursuit of knowledge.

In the intellectual pattern of experience, intelligence tasks experience to meet its demands and not the demands of any other level of subjectivity. The intellectual concern lends itself to a pattern of experience that is purely concerned with fulfilling the operations of intelligent consciousness. That is, experience is patterned to suit the needs of questions for intelligence and reflection. Memories, images, past judgments of fact are selected according to the relevance of the questions for understanding and verification of the correctness of that understanding. The selection informs the pattern that converges on terminal activities of insight, reflection, evaluation and judgment. According to Lonergan, feelings associated with the images, memories and judgments are less likely to converge upon the flow of consciousness in the intellectual pattern of experience. Still, the intellectual concern reaches down into the whole of one's

¹⁸ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 498.

underlying processes. Thus, Archimedes can take a bath and yet, his sensitive apparatus is prompted to converge upon the interests of his questions pertaining to volume. He is so overwhelmed by the interests of the intellectual concern and its release that he runs nude in the streets and cries, “Eureka!” He foregoes concern with intersubjective or biological demands. Archimedes’ attention is on the intellectual problem and its joyous release in insight.

One’s horizon of concern while in the intellectual pattern of experience operates in a world that is at once both specialized and universal. It is universal insofar as one’s concern is ultimately for truths about being. As Lonergan states:

Still, the significance of moving into the intellectual pattern of experience is that, when concern is purely intellectual wonder, the correlative becomes the universe. As long as consciousness is directed by whatever concerns one may have, one is in one’s world, but insofar as the intellectual pattern of experience is dominant, one is concerned, not with any private world, but with the universe.¹⁹

One’s horizon of concern is changed while in the intellectual pattern of experience such that one’s world is the universe and not the common sense world of everyday living. The intellectual pattern of experience finds its home in the theoretical stage of meaning where one attempts to follow through on the immanent dictates of intelligent operation. When operative in the theoretical stage of meaning, intelligence is meeting the demands of the desire to know and thus, intellectual concern dictates the flow of experience. By contrast, practical intelligence in the common sense stage of meaning is that specialization of intelligence that meets the blended concerns of a subject’s experience as they arise. In this way, demands at the level of experience give rise to a practically concerned intelligence that dominates one’s world-in-relation-to-me. However, through conscious selection of intellectual concern one can take steps to ensure that her experience is patterned intellectually so that she may enter the universe to be known and

¹⁹ LONERGAN, *Topics*, 88.

valued. Thus, for example, the intellectual concern selects a world populated by figures and concepts of theory that are also oriented toward the terminal activities of defining terms through their relations with other terms.

One can compare common sense practical intelligence meeting the varying demands of experience with a theoretical intelligence that consciously selects the intellectual pattern of experience to meet the demands of the intellectual concern, which is the pure unrestricted desire to know. Let us take Lonergan's example of Isaac Newton who consciously arranged his day to suit the demands of the intellectual pattern of experience.²⁰ Lonergan states:

When Newton was working out his theory of universal gravitation, he lived in his room for weeks on end. A bit of food was brought to him now and then, but he had very little interest in it, and he slept only when necessary, but as soon as that was over he was back at work. He was totally absorbed in the enucleation, the unfolding, of his idea. Insofar as it is possible for a man, he was living totally in the intellectual pattern of experience. When consciousness moves into the intellectual pattern of experience, one's concern becomes the wonder that Aristotle spoke of as the beginning of all science and philosophy. In the measure that that wonder is the dominant concern in consciousness, experience takes on a pattern of its own that is dictated by the exigences of that wonder.²¹

The example of Newton illustrates an exceptional case of a subjectivity that is almost exclusively concerned with meeting the demands of wonder or of the pure unrestricted desire to know. Most theoreticians, however, must function differently to meet the demands of their experience. In other words, for most of us, we must enter the stage of common sense to attend to other demands of experience as they arise.

²⁰ See, LONERGAN, *Topics*, 87: "What is the relation between the intellectual pattern of experience and activities such as willing, choosing, doing? In a first instance, the intellectual pattern of experience is spontaneous. But in a second instance, men can organize the conditions of their lives and the order of their work in a way that favors the intellectual pattern of experience. Once that step takes place, willing, choosing, and doing come into the picture. The organization of the conditions of the intellectual pattern of experience and the creation of tools and implements for favoring it yield the fundamental meaning of such terms as 'logic' and 'method.' In that case the will is willing the good, but the good it is willing is the good of intellect, the true. The true is a good, and the good is true. And insofar as the subject is willing the true, the subject himself and his other concerns are placed in abeyance. The subject's responsibility contracts to arriving at truth."

²¹ LONERGAN, *Topics*, 86.

It can appear that it is only the intellectual pattern that allows for a withdrawal from one's common sense world. But, entering into a specific pattern of experience also allows one to pursue the more modest task of withdrawing from one's familiar world of experience to pursue different concerns besides the practical concern to meet the demands of experience. These withdrawals allow the subject to entertain new experiences that can prompt questions of intelligence and other cognitional activities. These questions of intelligence can be pursued in the stages of common sense, theory and interiority. The key is that the attention to the unfamiliar experience allows for advancement in knowledge and expansion of horizons through questions of a genuinely curious intelligence. Cutting oneself off from new experiences within a specific differentiation of consciousness closes down the possibility of further questions beyond one's horizon set by her current state of development.

1.7. Summation

We have seen that, for Lonergan, ordinary experience is situated in the common sense stage of meaning. One's experience is made up of what one gives her attention to and what prompts intelligence to ask questions. In Lonergan's account of the common sense subject, demands arising from different levels of the subject give rise to different patterns of experience. Similar to how common sense understanding relates all things to what is familiar to the subject, ordinary experience is made up of relating new elements of experience back to what is familiar in experience to the subject. One's common sense world can be viewed as the horizon of ordinary, familiar experience made available by one's current state of development in knowledge and care. One's current development of knowledge, feelings, caring, valuing, experiencing lends itself to tendencies including the ordinary blend of patterns of experiences that occurs to the

subject. The subject operates in her common sense world that is specific to her, yet, it seems to form the generic world.

Intelligence reinforces demands at the level of experience through its questioning. We can become more familiar with different concerns and patterns of experience in order to be more liberated to choose what intelligence investigates. Through withdrawing into a specific pattern of experience, we can gain new experiences that prompt questions of intelligence that can lead to knowledge that expands our horizons. Our ability to differentiate and withdraw into selected patterns of experience strengthens our ability to navigate away from the common sense world and its preoccupation with practically getting things done.

Most generally, practical intelligence devises plans to meet demands of one's common sense world. These demands are what we attend to in our experience. We do not attend to every demand, but rather, there is a selectivity to our attention. This selection is more or less self-determined. We are not completely free to entertain whichever demand we want at all given moments. The turn to the dramatic pattern of experience will aid in clarifying the difference between common sense as blended experience and selected patterns of experience that are withdrawals from the common sense practical concern and its world of operation.

2. The Dramatic Pattern of Experience: Distinction of Concern and Terminal Activity

The aim of this second part of the chapter is to provide an explanation of differentiated dramatic experience as it relates to its own unique concern and terminal activity. This task consists of two steps. The first step will explore Lonergan's treatment of the dramatic pattern of experience as situated in *Insight*. The second step will explore Lonergan's treatment of a distinction between aesthetic and artistic experience in order to specify more sharply the nature of dramatic experience as a mode of concrete collaboration.

In step one, we shall see that each pattern of experience is subject to a controlling concern that functions to select contents for attention. The selection is based on the source of the pattern of experience's concern in the subject and its terminal activity. According to *Insight*, the terminal activity of dramatic concern is imagining possibilities for action and self-creation in contexts of collaboration with others. It is a dramatic artistry concerned with one's living in the world with other actors "in the primordial drama that the theatre only imitates."²² Lonergan situates the terminal activity of the dramatic pattern of experience in the cognitional sequence of practical insight and reflection. However, the source of the dramatic concern is not clearly stated and presents a puzzle. I suggest that this puzzle can be addressed if we turn to Lonergan's account of responsible consciousness in *Method*. Still, we can gain clarity about the source and meaning of the dramatic pattern of experience by contrast with accounts of other patterns of experience in *Insight*.

In this context, our analyses will refer to other patterns of experience in order to provide contrasts for assisting us in understanding how dramatic experience is different from other modes of experience including, due to their resonances with dramatic experience, the artistic and aesthetic patterns of experience. This will lead to step two of this part and into a key differentiation that will help set the stage for a more precise interpretation of the meaning and the source of the dramatic pattern of experience.

The first differentiation highlights the distinction between dramatic and artistic concern. Artistic concern is not related to one's actions with others; but rather, its terminal activity is to objectify and concretize aesthetic experience. The source of aesthetic experience's concern is empirical consciousness itself operating as openness to the world. The dramatic pattern of

²² LONERGAN, *Insight*, 211.

experience's terminal activity is imagining action in collaboration with others. This indicates that the source of dramatic experience is not empirical consciousness itself. To investigate the dramatic pattern of experience's source as well as provide further clarity about its terminal activity, I will turn to *Topics in Education*'s treatment of art and aesthetics. Here, the differences between aesthetic and artistic experience are further clarified by Lonergan. This will allow us to posit a distinction between dramatic-aesthetic experience and dramatic-artistic experience.

Although *Topics* helps us to identify and to utilize this basic distinction between aesthetic and artistic experience on behalf of our elaboration of the dramatic pattern of experience, it still will not provide, on its own, a full discussion of the source of the dramatic concern. In the next chapter, we will provide an account of dramatic experience working with value and responsible consciousness. There I will also propose that the dramatic pattern of experience is essential for responsible engagement. For the present, however, my argument is that the dramatic concern gives rise to a unique pattern of experience directed toward a specific terminal activity of imagining possibilities of interaction with others. Further, this pattern of experience is also a withdrawal from one's common sense world of experience that is particularly self-referential as it encloses the subject in familiar experiences rather than the new that prompts questions for understanding. We begin, then, with *Insight*'s treatment of the dramatic pattern of experience.

2.1. The Dramatic Pattern and Ordinary Experience

We turn now to *Insight*'s treatment of the dramatic pattern of experience. The dramatic pattern of experience refers to the drama of existence where one is acting with others as intersubjectively sensed and set within a stage of artefacts. To introduce this pattern of experience and its concern, Lonergan states,

If now we turn to ordinary human living, it is plain that we have to do with neither the biological nor the artistic nor the intellectual pattern of experience. Still, there is a stream

of consciousness, and the stream involves not only succession but also direction. Conspicuous in this direction is a concern to get things done. But behind palpable activities, there are motives and purposes; and in them it is not difficult to discern an artistic, or more precisely, a dramatic component.²³

At first reading, it may appear that Lonergan is equating ordinary experience with the dramatic pattern of experience. However, Lonergan is making a distinction between the blend of concerns in one's experience in the common sense world and the dramatic concern.

It is the case that in ordinary experience, dramatic, practical and biological concerns often blend to pattern experience. However, there are distinctions made in the text between these three concerns. The dramatic concern is artistic whereas practical concern is about "getting things done." Through our practically concerned intelligence, we devise plans that suit the demands of experience as we live. We build technologies, economies, and states which are complex networks of social interaction that manifest the schemes of practical intelligence. For Lonergan, this work of practical intelligence is ultimately only the setting for the drama of living. He states:

Still, this whole unfolding of practicality constitutes no more than the setting and the incidents of the drama. Delight and suffering, laughter and tears, joy and sorrow, aspiration and frustration, achievement and failure, wit and humor stand, not within practicality but above it. Man can pause and with a smile or a forced grin ask what the drama, what he himself is about. His culture is his capacity to ask, to reflect, to reach an answer that at once satisfies his intelligence and speaks to his heart.²⁴

We can take in this dramatic setting of our lives and with artistic wonder question what we are and why.²⁵ Moreover, in its proper unfolding, artistry questions practicality by imagining new possibilities instead of set plans.

²³ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 210.

²⁴ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 261.

²⁵ See, LONERGAN, *Insight*, 208-209: "For the animals, safely sheathed in biological routines, are not questions to themselves. But man's artistry testifies to his freedom. As he can do, so he can be what he pleases. What is he to be? Why? Art may offer attractive or repellent answers to these questions, but in its subtler forms it is content to communicate any of the moods in which such questions arise, to convey any of the tones in which they may be answered or ignored."

Beyond practical concern, one can get the impression that dramatic concern is a blend of the artistic and biological concerns. However, the point to be made is that, within our ordinary experience, dramatic artistry is what influences transformation of biological demands into more pleasing and dignified experiences. We may biologically need to eat and sleep, but, we dramatically demand table manners and fitted sheets. There are more or less practical ways to meet the demands of our biology, but our dramatic artistry demands dignity and approval from others. Dignity and approval from others are central motivations from which the dramatic concern operates. Our dramatic artistry is not completely free to pursue dignity and approval as we are limited by biological demands and the materials of our lives. We cannot ignore our physical or material limits or else our dramatic artistry falls short. For Lonergan, ordinary experience is not driven by mere practicality nor biology, but a mixture of the two, with a notable dramatic artistic trend.

2.2. The Dramatic Pattern and Other Patterns of Experience: a puzzle about the source of dramatic concern

The dramatic pattern elicits its own pattern of experience, which is neither a blend nor either the biological, artistic or intellectual patterns of experience. Confusion surrounding what exactly the dramatic pattern of experience is can be clarified by how *Insight* distinguishes one pattern of experience from another; i.e., based on the source of the pattern of experience's concern in the subject and its terminal activity. We begin with the biological pattern of experience. Here, empirical consciousness mediates the demands and sensations of our bodies:

the pattern is a set of intelligible relations that link together sequences of sensations, memories, images, conations, emotions, and bodily movements; and to name the pattern biological is simply to affirm that *the sequences converge upon terminal activities* of intussusception or reproduction, or, when negative in scope, self-preservation.²⁶

²⁶ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 206. Emphasis added.

Whereas the biological pattern of experience arises from the demands of our biological survival, aesthetic demands arise from the empirical level of consciousness itself. As it stands at the crossroads of the psyche and the intelligence, it is not surprising that its terminal activity is play and experience becomes a “self-justifying joy.”²⁷ Demands that pattern intellectual experience arise from intelligence and reflective understanding. The terminal activity is correct understanding executed in judgments of truth. It may appear as though intelligence is only operative in the intellectual pattern of experience. It is the case that intelligence is allowed its free reign and runs its course in judgments of truth. However, for every pattern, intelligence continually operates to discover something in the flow of experience and, by doing so, augments the sequence of the pattern. In other words, intelligence discovers and reinforces concern. Consequently, one can just stare, listen, touch without going beyond the sensation, but it takes effort to maintain this and in maintaining it, one is either appreciating an intelligible form (aesthetic experience) or deliberately resting one’s intelligence (a form of meditation). Finally, the demands of the psyche are most fully met in the dream, when the pattern of empirical consciousness is not controlled by the psyche’s censorship or the concern of intelligence.

If we turn to *Insight*’s treatment of the dramatic pattern of experience, the terminal activity of consciousness is stated clearly, but the source of the dramatic concern is a puzzle. The terminal activity of the dramatic concern is outlining courses of action within the context of our collaboration with others. Lonergan situates the dramatic pattern of experience within the sequence of cognitional operations that lead to practical insight and reflection:

Before there can be reflection or criticism, evaluation or deliberation, our imaginations and intelligence must collaborate in representing the projected course of action that is to be submitted to reflection and criticism, to evaluation and decision. Already in the prior collaboration of imagination and intelligence, the dramatic pattern is operative, outlining

²⁷ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 208.

how we might behave before others and charging the outline with an artistic transformation of a more elementary aggressivity and affectivity.²⁸

The dramatic concern demands that the flow of consciousness converges upon the terminal activity of outlining and presenting possible courses of action to be understood by practical intelligence and evaluated by practical reflection. The dramatic pattern of experience is operative in the sequence of cognitional operations of rational self-consciousness in *Insight* or what *Method* refers to as the responsible level of consciousness. This presents a puzzle regarding the source of dramatic concern.

In *Insight*, rational self-consciousness stems from the intellectual concern or the pure, unrestricted desire to know. It involves practical intelligence in devising plans of action and practical reflection evaluating such plans in terms of motives and possible outcomes. The most rationally self-consistent plans are those that are motivated by their valuable contribution toward the intelligible good of order. In other words, rational self-consciousness is motivated to enact value. In *Insight*, Lonergan has yet to conceive of value as a distinct operator or notion that orients the subject on its own responsible level of consciousness. This is set down in *Method* where responsible consciousness is concerned with authentic self-making and collaboration with others toward valuable projects of living. I contend that without such a notion of value and its unfolding on the distinct level of responsible consciousness, there can be a restriction on the possible objects under consideration in connection to the dramatic pattern of experience. Lonergan emphasizes the artistic and creative source of the dramatic pattern of experience rather than a responsible and self-creative source. Moreover, without advertence to *Method*'s account of responsible consciousness, we are left to puzzle over the source of the dramatic pattern of experience.

²⁸ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 212.

There are elements of Lonergan's account of the dramatic pattern of experience that make it appear as though it anticipates participation in responsible consciousness as depicted in *Method* and developed from *Insight*. In *Insight*, it is through the dramatic pattern of experience that we imagine, feel and intelligibly relate elements in our living to give form to plans of action. These forms are situated within a world of the drama where we collaborate with other actors. Lonergan refers to dramatic experience's character making aspect. We are often situated within the world by virtue of our dramatic roles with others. In the context of *Insight*'s treatment of the dramatic pattern of experience, Lonergan asserts that our characters are shaped, not only by the roles that we play, but by the deliberate choices that we make. Whether we deliberate about our character in an effort toward self-making, we are shaped by the drama itself. As well, we are shaped by the drama and act along with it even if we are not imagining and forming possibilities for our action. Our dramatic artistry is not automatic. In ordinary experience, the familiar blend of concerns converges upon the flow of experience and directs it toward imagining possibilities that do not seem freely formed by us. Our possibilities are limited by a blend of concerns that repress images and further exploration of experience and intelligence. Life can seem humdrum or automatic while the freedom involved in dramatic artistry appears absent or lost.

Moreover, in *Insight*, the foundation of networks of social relationships and activity is based in dramatic artistry. If we are to get things done and work with our fellow actors, we need more than practical schemes of intelligence. We require collaboration and we learn how to collaborate through emulation or acting like others. Lonergan states:

The execution of his practical schemes requires the collaboration of others. Still, the network of man's social relationships has not the fixity of organization of the hive or the anthill; nor again is it primarily the product of pure intelligence devising blueprints for human behavior. Its ground is aesthetic liberation and artistic creativity, where the artistry

is limited by biological exigence, inspired by example and emulation, confirmed by admiration and approval, sustained by respect and affection.²⁹

We may be overwhelmed by the practical concern to get things done, but, we cannot simply demand that others do what we understand to be correct. We need to converse, arrange, and collaborate with others. This requires courtesy or manners in our performance. These manners have the underlying motivation of giving respect and affection for our fellow actors. A simple, “Hello, how are you?” demonstrates at least a nominal respect for another’s well-being. Additionally, our collaboration with others is learned through a process of acting like others who know more than we do. At first, manners may appear perfunctory and our guardians cajole us to emulate their politeness towards others. As we develop, we begin to understand and to judge for ourselves the importance of such politeness to others in our dramatic performance.

In this way, there is an aspect of subjectivity that stands out as distinctively operative within the dramatic pattern and it is the feelings related to people and one’s community. Lonergan asserts that our dramatic “artistry is limited by biological exigence, inspired by example and emulation, confirmed by admiration and approval, sustained by respect and affection.”³⁰ Thus, central motivations for our dramatic artistry are admiration, approval, respect and affection. We feel these motivations. Where do they come from? Within *Insight*, Lonergan references the spontaneous intersubjective feelings that form one of the bases of communal living. The other basis is practical intelligence that devises schemes of social interaction in civil society. With the rise of civil society, intersubjective feelings and the need for those feelings do not fall away. Rather, these feelings and needs remain. In our pursuit of dignified living with

²⁹ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 211.

³⁰ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 211.

others, we imagine dramatically meeting the demands of living while maintaining or gaining approval and admiration from others.

This may lead us to the assertion that dramatic artistry is in league with the source of group bias. That is, in *Insight*, intersubjective feelings are mainly discussed as sources of group bias that orient the subject toward maintaining or achieving what is good for the group rather than what is truly good. However, imagining dramatic possibilities of collaboration does not always lead to group biased decisions. Later, in *Method*, Lonergan will develop the notion of feelings as intentional response to value as well as the agreeable and disagreeable. In this way, feelings will be established as playing essential roles in formulating plans of action and in motivating judgments and decisions of value. In *Method*, the responsible concern with value sublates or harnesses all of one's subjectivity, including one's feeling dimension, toward the pursuit of valuable activities. In *Insight*, the feeling dimension of the subject has yet to be fully integrated into an account of rational self-consciousness or responsible consciousness. We will discuss the role of intersubjective feelings and the possible role of value feelings in the dramatic pattern of experience in the next chapter. Here, we will again consider that without a turn to *Method*'s account of responsible consciousness, we are left to puzzle over the source of the concern of dramatic experience and how the terminal activity of imagining possibilities of collaboration with others functions within the sequence of practical intelligence and reflection.

If one takes the dramatic pattern of experience as deriving from or, at least, working with the responsible level of consciousness, there is opened up a way to conceive of the experience of value as operative in the ordinary blend of concerns and experiences. It is possible that we can differentiate such a pattern of experience and so encourage its occurrence through freedom of the selection of concern. In the next chapter, we will demonstrate the possibility of the dramatic

pattern working with responsible consciousness by experiencing value and imaging valuable actions. Here, we are discussing the source of the dramatic pattern of experience in subjectivity and one may not be convinced that the dramatic pattern of experience is based ultimately in responsible consciousness. Thus, we turn back to an investigation of the terminal activity of the dramatic pattern of experience with a view to locate its source in the subject. We can provide clarity regarding the concern and terminal activity of the dramatic pattern of experience through a contrast with those patterns that Lonergan most closely associates with it; namely, the aesthetic and artistic patterns of experience.

2.3. Clarifying the Dramatic Pattern of Experience through Contrast with Aesthetic and Artistic Concern and Terminal Activity

In order to gain further clarification about the dramatic concern and its specific terminal activity, we will inquire about its source in the multi-layered dimensions of the person. At the outset of *Insight*'s treatment of the dramatic pattern of experience, Lonergan distinguishes the dramatic concern from other concerns that pattern experience. There are within the ordinary blend of experience "motives and purposes" that have "an artistic, or more precisely, a dramatic component" that gives rise to "neither the biological nor the artistic nor the intellectual pattern of experience."³¹ The dramatic pattern of experience is at once artistic and yet not solely determined by artistic concern. From a reading of *Insight*, we may infer that the dramatic concern is somehow in league with other concerns, such as the artistic or biological, but, it does not share in their distinctive sources in the subject. Clarity can be achieved through contrast. The closest approximation to dramatic concern is the artistic concern and we may inquire into its source and terminal activity.

³¹ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 210.

According to *Insight*, artistic concern originates in aesthetic experience where experience is patterned according to its own demands. Lonergan states, “the artist exercises his intelligence in discovering ever novel forms that unify and relate the contents and acts of aesthetic experience.”³² That is, the artist objectifies for further formulation in the artwork an aesthetic experience. Aesthetic experience liberates experience itself. Our play demonstrates to us that “experience can occur for the sake of experiencing, that it can slip beyond the confines of serious-minded biological purpose, and that this very liberation is a spontaneous, self-justifying joy.”³³ Artistic experience grasps a pattern in the aesthetic experience and seeks to create new ways to express such patterns in idealized forms. Artistic creation initiates a twofold freedom. Not only is one free of biological purpose, one’s intelligence is freed to create form without the constraints of submitting it to criticism or judgment:

For the validation of the artistic idea is the artistic deed. The artist establishes his insights, not by proof or verification, but by skilfully embodying them in colors and shapes, in sounds and movements, in the unfolding situations and actions of fiction.³⁴

Artistic concern derives from experience for its own sake and the artistic terminal activity is the free creation of forms that invite experience for its own sake.

One can make parallels between artistic and dramatic ideas as imagined possibilities of form. Lonergan states, “Not only, then, is man capable of aesthetic liberation and artistic creativity, but his first work of art is his own living.”³⁵ Both the dramatic and artistic concerns pattern experience and initiate a freedom of intelligence to imagine possibilities of form to enact. However, these parallels also give rise to distinctions that indicate that the source of the dramatic

³² LONERGAN, *Insight*, 208.

³³ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 208

³⁴ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 208.

³⁵ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 210.

concern is not aesthetic experience or an artwork to be experienced for its own sake. Lonergan states that the ground of human collaboration is “aesthetic liberation and artistic creativity, where the artistry is limited by biological exigence, inspired by example and emulation.”³⁶ Unlike artistic ideas of form in the artwork, dramatic ideas of form are not free from biological constraints. Moreover, whereas the artist is concerned with making art out of selected materials that can be manipulated at will, the existential dramatist is concerned with shaping one’s life with limited choice in her materials, which are far less malleable. Unlike the artist, the dramatist cannot completely control outside stimulus or the materials of one’s artistry. The dramatist acts with others who contribute to the form of one’s life and the drama itself shapes the artistry of the dramatist. There are demands made upon the dramatic subject that cannot be ignored. For example, one must eventually include the biological drive to sleep into one’s performance. Otherwise, fatigue limits the performance and it becomes tired and difficult.

The differences between artistic and dramatic ideas reveal that the dramatist is not entirely concerned with the creation of form for the sake of aesthetic experience. Thus, what makes the dramatic and artistic concern ultimately distinctive in *Insight* is the difference between their terminal cognitional activities. The dramatic concern’s terminal activity is imagining possibilities for one’s own living in the dramatic world. That is, one is specifically imagining possibilities in relation to role and character set within a collaborative framework. In the artistic pattern of experience, one is not concerned with her role in collaboration with others, but rather, the artist formulates for representation in the artwork an aesthetic pattern of experience.

Lonergan’s *Topics in Education* provides further clarification of the dramatic pattern of experience through contrast with aesthetic and artistic experience. To begin with, *Topics* expands

³⁶ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 211.

on *Insight*'s formulation of the aesthetic pattern of experience. Here aesthetic experience is discussed as a "purely experiential pattern of experience." Aesthetic experience liberates through an "exclusion of alien patterns that instrumentalize experience."³⁷ It is experienced as a release because it liberates experience to imagine, feel, remember as it will and it frees intelligence to participate in the intelligible forms of what is sensed. Aesthetic experience is presented with a distinct operator at the level of empirical consciousness. Lonergan states:

Moreover, besides the retinue of associations, affects, emotions, tendencies, there is also in the purely experiential pattern what in *Insight* I referred to as the operator. Just as on the intellectual level the operator is wonder, the pure desire to know, so on the sensitive level there is a corresponding operator. With it are associated feelings of awe, fascination, the uncanny. It is an openness to the world, to adventure, to greatness, to goodness, to majesty.³⁸

The empirical operator as openness to the world allows for a unique participation in the world that is prior to the distinction between subject and object. Aesthetic engagement in art or in nature is formulated using the Aristotelean axiom, "sense in act is the sensible in act, and intellect in act is the intelligible in act."³⁹ Intelligence grasps a meaning in aesthetic experience, but, it is elemental. We are engaged in the concrete intelligibility of the relationships among elements in what is sensed. We experience the movement of the dance, the time of the music, and the relations of the colors. Consciousness moves into these relationships and experiences their rhythms situated in the form that engages us aesthetically. Consciousness becomes the pattern at the experiential level and it feels and delights in the pattern.

This leads to a clarifying contrast between the concerns of the aesthetic and the artistic pattern of experience. Aesthetic concern is for engagement in concrete intelligible form

³⁷ LONERGAN, *Topics*, 213.

³⁸ LONERGAN, *Topics*, 214.

³⁹ LONERGAN, *Topics*, 215.

experienced through the pattern of experience. Here, meaning is elemental. Artistic concern is with objectifying the pattern of aesthetic experience in order to formulate a concrete intelligible form in the artwork that gives rise to the desired aesthetic experience. The meaning is no longer elemental, but rather it is artistic meaning. The basis of the engagement in and objectification of concrete intelligible form is the operator at the empirical level of consciousness; namely, openness to the world and this is experienced as aesthetic engagement. That is, through artistic concern and experience, we can explore and formulate elemental meaning in the artwork. The artwork is its own mode of meaning that also communicates that meaning. The artist objectifies the purely experiential pattern to shape it into an idealized form, but, this formulation in the artwork requires a stepping-back from the aesthetic experience to objectify its pattern. According to Lonergan,

The process of objectifying introduces, so to speak, a psychic distance. No longer is one simply experiencing. Objectification involves a separation, a distinction, a detachment, between oneself and one's experience. One can experience emotions and feelings, but at that moment one is not artistic. Poetry, according to Wordsworth, is emotion recollected in tranquility.⁴⁰

Artistic objectification means detaching ourselves from the feelings associated with the pattern so that we may grasp what it is in the pattern that is really significant. By significant is meant what enticed one to want to engage in the aesthetic pattern in the first place. The accomplished artist discovers and works to create the form that invites and maintains aesthetic engagement while offering novelty to inspire feelings of awe and fascination.

2.4. The Possibility of a Distinction between Dramatic-Aesthetic Experience and Dramatic-Artistic Experience

The distinction between aesthetic engagement in concrete intelligibility and the artistic objectification of such meaning in the process of artistic creation offers a contrast that can be

⁴⁰ LONERGAN, *Topics*, 218.

applied to the dramatic pattern of experience. There is an aspect of an aesthetic-like engagement in Lonergan's account of the dramatic pattern of experience. In the aesthetic pattern of experience, one is engaged in openness to the intelligible relations of the world. But, we are not separate from the concrete intelligible relationships. Rather, consciousness moves into the space of the painting or the time of the music. While not engaged in the artwork, we can become absorbed in the concrete intelligible relationships of nature and our surroundings. We enjoy a sunset or flower or a patterned rug or bedspread. The pattern catches our attention. Similarly, we can become aesthetically engaged in the dramatic situation and be affected by the situation. Our experience undergoes a dramatic "aesthetic liberation."⁴¹ We can become engrossed in the delightful or repulsive experience of engagement in the dramatic form, which refers, in part, to concrete or imagined collaboration. Another part of this dramatic form is intersubjective feelings. Thus, in dramatic-aesthetic experience, we are appreciating performance in concrete or imagined collaboration and appreciating the feelings with and for others whether aggressive or affectionate.

Building on this dramatic-aesthetic moment of experiential participation in dramatic form, there is also a dramatic-artistic moment that can be compared to the artistic objectification of aesthetic form. Like the artist who objectifies aesthetic experience engaged in concrete intelligibilities, we can step-back and objectify the dramatic form in which we are situated. In doing so, we can imagine new possibilities of dramatic form and also new possibilities for our participation in it. Here we are reminded of the terminal activity of the dramatic pattern of experience and that is, "outlining how we might behave before others and charging the outline

⁴¹ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 211.

with an artistic transformation of a more elementary aggressivity and affectivity.”⁴² In the dramatic-artistic moment, one is objectifying the situation and imagining possibilities. The feelings one has about these possibilities are not immediate like they are in the dramatic-aesthetic moment. In the dramatic-artistic moment, we would likely do well to imagine possibilities and associated feelings as if they were “recollected in tranquility.”

2.5. *Summation*

Topics’ treatment of art and the aesthetic provides key insights for differentiating the dramatic pattern of experience. It confirms that aesthetic and artistic concerns originate in the empirical level of consciousness and its operator is openness to the world. Further, it provides a helpful contrast between aesthetic engagement in elemental meaning and artistic objectification of it that seeks to represent it in the concrete art form, which provides the audience with a concrete intelligibility to be participated in aesthetically. This distinction can be applied to the dramatic pattern of experience and gives rise to two distinct moments in dramatic experience; namely, a dramatic-aesthetic moment and a dramatic-artistic moment. However, we are still left to search for the source of the dramatic concern in the subject. This is because artistic concern derives from the empirical level of consciousness which is ultimately concerned with openness to data and not collaborative activity in one’s world. Dramatic artistry can also be conceived as openness to the reception of the world. However, rather than anticipating the higher integration of art for the purposes of aesthetic engagement, it anticipates the higher integration of concrete performance for the sake of collaborative engagement with others. This suggests that the source of the dramatic concern is not the empirical level of consciousness itself.

⁴² LONERGAN, *Insight*, 211.

The terminal activity of the dramatic pattern of experience is imagining possibilities of action and Lonergan situates it within the cognitive sequence of practical insight and reflection that intelligently devises and evaluates possible courses of action. Within *Insight*, this sequence derives from our rational self-consciousness that is concerned with fulfilling the exigencies of the intellectual desire to know. If we turn to *Method*, there is a responsible level of consciousness that is “concerned with ourselves, our own operations, our goals.”⁴³ Responsible consciousness’ operator is value that is experienced as the ceaseless questions for deliberation: “What can I do?” “Is it worthwhile?” “Should I do it?”

But, can value prompt us to imagine, feel and form dramatic possibilities of action for our living? I would answer yes. Feelings as intentional responses to value can be prompted by imaginative possibilities of self-transcendence. This suggests that the dramatic pattern of experience is at home within the context of responsible consciousness. Still, we can recall that imagining dramatic possibilities is not automatic within the common sense world-in-relation-to-me. Here, we are often enclosed in the familiar experiences of the world as we are oriented by the habitual concerns that lead to these familiar experiences. Practical intelligence acts as a monitor of experiential demand and devises plans to meet the demands of experience as they arise among the habitual concerns of ordinary living. As just a specific withdrawal from the common sense world, the dramatic pattern of experience is not intelligently and rationally informed to pursue value. Still, its own unique terminal activity of imagining possibilities for dramatic action with others draws us away from concerns of the common sense world-in-relation-to-me to imagine possibilities of action with others. I suggest that this makes the

⁴³ LONERGAN, *Method*, 9.

dramatic pattern of experience a mode of empirical consciousness that is particularly susceptible to the concern for value in a subject who is morally and religiously converted.

Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to examine the dramatic pattern of experience as distinct from the blend of common sense and from other unique patterns of experience. The dramatic pattern occurs within ordinary experience but is a withdrawal from the characteristic preoccupations of common sense. The unique character of the dramatic pattern was explained primarily in relation to its concern and terminal activity. The dramatic pattern of experience, in its own right, as distinctively concerned and operating toward its terminal activity, initiates in the subject a turn away from the common sense world of things-in-relation-to-me. Its distinctive concern is with the drama of living in collaboration with other actors. And its terminal activity is envisioning forms of action and interaction in collaboration with others with respect to one's role and character. Certainly, we can be biased in imagining these possibilities. In the next chapter, we will note that group bias can stem from dramatic experience operating in the common sense stage of meaning, especially when one is not morally converted. Moreover, in terms of the cognitional sequence of responsible consciousness, practical intelligence has yet to step in and to devise the plan of action to implement the imagined dramatic form. As such, it is difficult to say if one can even execute the imagined dramatic possibility. As well, practical reflection has not critically assessed whether the plan stemming from the dramatic idea is responsible as in meeting the demands of value.

In the dramatic pattern of experience, we are tasked to imagine possibilities of living with others. But, the dramatic pattern of experience is most often harnessed by common sense subjectivity to meet the various demands of experience that are determined pressing by practical

intelligence in the common sense stage of meaning. But, like other patterns of experience, the dramatic pattern can unfold within the stage of interiority. In this chapter, we examined the dramatic pattern of experience as a specific moment or withdrawal from ordinary, common sense experience. In the next chapter, we will explore how the dramatic pattern of experience is harnessed by practical intelligence operating in the third stage of meaning as it heads toward value. As well, we will situate the dramatic pattern of experience within a subjectivity that is morally and religiously converted. This will further aid in the project of building bridges of communication among diverse standpoints within the field of theological ethics.

Chapter 8

The Possibility of Dramatic Experience Facilitating Morally and Religiously Concerned Reflection on Action in Ordinary Living

This chapter returns to chapter five and six's discussion of ethical abnegation in the face of the problem of liberation. However, we will leave it to the next and final chapter to bring the insights of this chapter to bear in the dialogue with MacIntyre and Taylor regarding ethical abnegation and their presentation of emotivist and subjectivist trends within the current state of ethical theory. The problem of liberation is that we act before we know how to act and this causes a lack of responsible and intelligible relations in the social order. Though we lack complete moral knowledge, we can also lack the antecedent willingness to learn how to be more responsible. The general bias of common sense accelerates this problem. This bias orients us as though common sense is competent in all areas of living and learning. Common sense relates all things back to the subject's current understanding with a practically concerned intelligence. This entails that any new understanding is only relevant insofar as it can be used to solve the practical problems that the subject as-one-is knows and cares about. Hence, common sense screens out questions beyond solving current or foreseeable problems to the self-as-is. In this way, the general bias of common sense reinforces the problem of ethical abnegation where we dismiss our own ethical questions as irrelevant to the current situation because they are not of practical use. In other words, we dismiss the further relevant questions about the worth of our actions in collaborative projects and the worth of the projects themselves. This stalls moral development as we are limiting ourselves and not pursuing moral self-transcendence.

Taking moral reflection seriously in one's concrete, everyday living is a commitment lived out in moral conversion. We are committed to engage our moral interiority to perform genuine inquiries into the value of our actions and our proposed courses of actions. This kind of

moral reflection requires moving beyond the practical concerns of intelligence that seeks to find solutions or plans to get what the subject wants or needs done. To understand and confirm the true worth of our actions, we must engage in reflection that leads to judgments of value. By our own moral reflection, we are tasked to consider the larger context of the social orders in which we are a part and to consider the possible outcomes of our actions to this social order. Finally, we are authentic to this process of moral reflection that ends in value determination when we decide to perform according to its dictates. We have noted, however, that a moral conversion as a commitment to value reflection and action does not make one morally perfect. There is still the problem of liberation.

For Lonergan, the basic problem of liberation is not solved by our reflection or our action alone. We need help from God who loves us and grounds the intelligibility and goodness of the world. In graceful acceptance of God's love, we are oriented by this love to seek the intelligible, the true, and the good. By our love for God we are oriented by an ultimate concern to do the good and so are aided in dealing with the effects of the problem of liberation. These effects are an unintelligible and irresponsible social situation as well as the suffering that results from dealing with decline in the social order. While the problem does not go away, we are granted the confident hope that by our correct understanding and love of others we can contribute to the good. Instead of expecting more decline in the social situation, we can expect that our good actions will foster the potential goodness and intelligibility in all things.

However, we noted that even the converted have to navigate the many divergent concerns of ordinary living besides the moral and religious. That is, we have many needs and desires as we live our ordinary lives. How are we going to constantly maintain the orientation to love God and pursue value in ordinary living? In the last chapter, we provided an account of the dramatic

pattern of experience. This is because it is a pattern that pertains to human action in collaboration with others and it is often situated within the ordinary blend of experience when one is in the default, common sense world-in-relation-to-me. In part one of this chapter, the intention is to establish the possibility that the dramatic pattern of experience can work with responsible interiority's concern with value. I will offer that we can have dramatic-aesthetic experiences where we appreciate and enjoy value in the concrete social order. We can also have moments of dramatic artistry where we withdraw from the blended concerns of ordinary experience, with its notable practical thrust, to imagine new possibilities for our performance. In this dramatic-artistic withdrawal, we are not bound by intelligence and reflection. We are free to imagine ourselves participating in valuable projects of living. In identifying dramatic experience of value, we can recognize the experience in ordinary living. However, our dramatic-aesthetic experiences and our dramatic-artistic withdrawals cannot by themselves initiate valuable actions. We need to be concerned with the actual functioning of the social order in which we are a part and engage in understanding and reflecting on the concrete situation and our possible actions within it. Still, we may explore the possibility of imagining ourselves operating in a dramatic way according to value. Is there a way to envision engagement in valuable activity for pedagogical and developmental reasons?

To follow is a brief account of the characteristics of different worlds that could provide the "dramatic setting" for our dramatic-artistic ideas about collaboration with others. What I mean by dramatic setting is the world in which we envision the potentially intelligible interactions of our actions with our fellow collaborators. We present the common sense worlds of the outer and inner drama, the world of human value and God's world. Though it can be assumed that whatever world one imagines participating in has an effect on one's dramatic-

artistic outlines, I will suggest that we do not primarily envision such worlds for our dramatic setting. It is more the case that dramatic setting is populated by feelings towards the intentional objects that prompt our care to act. The dramatic experience, on its own, in these different settings, without moral reflection, cannot initiate moral self-transcendence within the common sense world-in-relation-to-me. The consideration of whether it is possible for the dramatic-artistic experience to function to promote acts of moral self-transcendence remains.

In the second part, we will explore a key feature common to both the dramatic pattern of experience and ethical reflection operating in the stage of interiority, namely, feelings as intentional responses to objects. We will provide an account of dramatic experience incorporating both intersubjective feelings and self-transcending feelings as intentional response to value. We will offer that intersubjectively communicated feelings of approval and disapproval reinforce and educate feelings as intentional responses to objects that can prompt action. Such feelings can be based in self-satisfaction (what is agreeable to the self-as-is) or they can be based in value (what is considered worthwhile considering the self-one-could-be). With the addition of feelings as intentional responses to values within the dramatic pattern of experience, it is possible for dramatic-artistic ideas to prompt a thrust toward moral self-transcendence. However, to address group bias that draws from feelings that intersubjectively apprehend objects considered agreeable to group interest, there is need of a conversion that involves the subject's commitment to pursue value through ethical interiority. Though a turn to ethical interiority is required to overcome group bias, not everyone and at all points in time is capable of living out of a horizon in pursuit of value. Even in the morally converted subjectivity, the general bias exerts an influence and orients one's questions and reflections toward the concerns of the self-as-one-is. In the concluding reflections, it will be offered that dramatic artistry can also function within

religiously converted subjectivity to address the general bias that harnesses our care toward the world-in-relation-to-me. In our abiding love for God, we desire to contribute to the social order for the sake of other participants even if we are still functioning within the common sense world-in-relation-to-me. Thus, religious conversion's existential orientation toward love of God can enable dramatic-artistic forms that incorporate self-transcending feelings of care toward the other beyond one's intersubjective group of belonging and those whom we have selected.

1. Possibilities of the Dramatic Pattern of Experience: Its Working with Value, its Liberation, and its Dramatic Settings

In part one of this chapter, we will inquire into the possibility that the dramatic pattern of experience can work with responsible consciousness by experiencing and appreciating value. I will make a distinction between dramatic-aesthetic engagement and the dramatic-artistic objectification of experience that is a withdrawal from ordinary experience. To do this, I will draw on the distinction Lonergan makes in *Topics* between an aesthetic engagement in experience and an artistic objectification of experience. Rather than working at cross pursuits with the concern for value, dramatic experience can recognize, participate in and enjoy experiences of value. Still, one needs moral understanding and reflection to engage in valuable activity. Thus, there is ambivalence involved in dramatic-aesthetic and dramatic-artistic objectification working with value without a withdrawal into intellectual or reflective analysis of situations. We cannot actually break out of old habits of knowing and doing at the level of experience.

However, there is a pedagogical reason to conceive of how one can experience value in the world. We need experiential data to gain insights into how we work with value in ordinary experience. Hence, we turn to the notion of dramatic setting that is the world opened up by imaging our interactive collaborations with others. I will describe possible dramatic settings as

differing worlds opened up by specific concerns. These will range from the common sense engagement in the outer and inner drama of living, the intellectual concern as engagement in the universe, the concern for value as an engagement in the human world of values and religious love as an engagement in God's world. This will allow brief consideration of the possibility of imagining dramatic settings that encourage the experience and reflection on value. We will note the difficulty of imagining a dramatic setting of value that anticipates actual engagement in concrete collaboration.

1.1. The Possibility of Experiencing Value in the Dramatic Pattern of Experience

Here we are inquiring into the possibility of experiencing value within the dramatic pattern of experience. A pattern makes an experience more perceptible. Patterned in dramatic experience are one's potential actions situated in the interactions of one's collaborators in the drama of living. The dramatic concern operates within the interchange of experience and intelligence to pattern experience toward dramatic ideas regarding one's actions in collaboration with others. Lonergan situates the formation of these dramatic ideas within the sequence of the cognitional operations of rational self-consciousness in *Insight* or what is named responsible consciousness in *Method*. The concern of responsible consciousness is value. The unhindered unfolding of responsible consciousness heads toward the terminal activity of judgments of value that issue in moral decisions and actions.

However, the responsible level of consciousness is not treated as having its own pattern of experience in *Insight* or *Method*. *Method* lists the patterns of experience found in *Insight* and refers the reader to them as a general tool for differentiating consciousness.¹ The endeavour in the last chapter was to perform an analysis for differentiation from the starting point of the

¹ LONERGAN, *Method*, 285.

dramatic pattern of experience and its terminal activity. However, we can begin with the starting point of responsible consciousness and inquire into the possibility of its working with the dramatic pattern of experience.

Lonergan situates the dramatic pattern of experience within the sequence of cognitional operations that lead to practical insight and reflection:

Before there can be reflection or criticism, evaluation or deliberation, our imaginations and intelligence must collaborate in representing the projected course of action that is to be submitted to reflection and criticism, to evaluation and decision. Already in the prior collaboration of imagination and intelligence, the dramatic pattern is operative, outlining how we might behave before others and charging the outline with an artistic transformation of a more elementary aggressivity and affectivity.²

It is possible that dramatic concern can limit horizons of knowing and caring to the collaborative activity that one images. Hence, if one is only operating in the dramatic horizon of concern, understanding and judgment will not hold sway. One is only concerned with experiencing the world in a dramatic-aesthetic way or artistically imagining possibilities. One's operations of formulating practical insights or plans of how to get something done are not guaranteed from the standpoint of the dramatic concern. Likewise, the operation of practical intelligence may not give way to practical reflection and moral evaluation of one's plans of action. This is especially the case when one is overtaken by the general bias of common sense that is concerned with understanding only that which is immediately relevant to performing activities. When the general bias is operative, one is not interested in asking the further relevant questions about one's activities. One can operate in the horizon of practical intelligence seeking to get things done throughout most of one's day without adverting to ethical questions.

The inadvertence to value in ethical questions is, in fact, one of the major sources of decline in the social situation within Lonergan's treatment of ethics. Without the commitment to

² LONERGAN, *Insight*, 212.

ethical reflection made in moral conversion, practically concerned intelligence can give way to biases and decline. Still, practically concerned intelligence is a necessary component in human living and ethical engagement. Is there a similar ambivalence with regard to dramatic concern and its pattern of experience? Is it possible for dramatic experience to “work with” value by participating in value at some points, that is, without a commitment to value made in moral conversion or the control of interiority? To answer this question we turn to Lonergan’s *Topics* where he asserts the possibility of an aesthetic experience of value as well as the human being’s artistic capability to envision new “richer” possibilities of living in the ordinary world.

In the last chapter, we argued for a distinction between a dramatic-aesthetic engagement and a dramatic-artistic objectification of our participation in concrete collaborative situations. Our basis for such a distinction is Lonergan’s discussion of aesthetic experience and artistic objectification of that experience in *Topics*. For Lonergan, the artist presents a concrete intelligibility that is formulated in the artwork. This intelligibility invites consciousness in an aesthetic engagement. Consciousness moves into the space of the painting or with the time of the music. One is participating in elemental meaning and the concrete intelligibility is not understood, reflected upon or formulated into an account for judgments of truth. Aesthetic participation in concrete intelligibility is a purely experiential moment where one’s experience is not being used but enjoyed. Aesthetic experience is a free reign of experience in consciousness without interference. Let us consider the possibility of dramatic-aesthetic experience as a participation in concrete and intelligible goods of order. This dramatic-aesthetic experience would be a purely experiential participation in an intelligible good of order. It is an experience prior to the operations of responsible consciousness that understands, evaluates and judges goods of order according to value.

Lonergan asserts that one can apprehend value aesthetically and in doing so we “apprehend the human good on its profoundest level or, on the contrary, to sense something wrong, in a very immediate fashion.”³ When there is something wrong with the good of order, when it is not transparent or lacks intelligibility, it is ugly.⁴ However, when it is genuinely good, one can apprehend it aesthetically. Lonergan states:

Aesthetic value is the realization of the intelligible in the sensible: when the good of order of a society is transparent, when it shines through the products of that society, the actions of its members, its structure of interdependence, the status and personality of the persons participating in the order. You can recognize a happy home or a happy community. The good of order can be transparent in all the things made, all the actions performed, in the habits and the institutions. It strikes the eye.⁵

Perhaps, here Lonergan is referring to what could be construed as elemental value. For now, we can posit a dramatic-aesthetic engagement as a participation and enjoyment of the intelligible good of order before it is reflected upon, criticized, evaluated and judged. In dramatic-aesthetic engagement, one is not operating according to aesthetic concerns *per se*. When aesthetic concern is in complete control of consciousness, there is openness to the world of concrete intelligibility. This is not equivalent to the end goal of one’s participation as an actor in that concrete intelligibility. However, there is reason to assert that dramatic-aesthetic experience shares in the liberation of experience found in aesthetic experience.

1.2. Dramatic-Aesthetic Liberation of Experience and Intelligence

I will offer that there is a proper liberation of experience and intelligence in dramatic-aesthetic engagement as an appreciation and openness to the world as good. We have seen that aesthetic experience is experiencing for its own sake. Enjoyment and appreciation within the

³ LONERGAN, *Topics*, 37.

⁴ LONERGAN, *Topics*, 44.

⁵ LONERGAN, *Topics*, 37.

aesthetic experience comes from the compound of the release of experience from alien concerns and the release of intelligence from exact formulation. Consciousness is attentive to the sensuous, to imagination, feeling, possibility and freedom. In dramatic-aesthetic liberation of experience, we would also be free to attend to the sensuous and free to imagine and to feel for its own sake. However, it can be argued that there is a key distinction regarding what we feel for between aesthetic experience and dramatic-aesthetic experience.

Unlike in aesthetic experience, dramatic-aesthetic liberation of experience is specifically related to feelings for our collaborators. Most basically, what one feels in dramatic-aesthetic experience are intersubjective feelings that bond collaborators. Lonergan states, “Prior to the “we” that results from the mutual love of an “I” and a “thou”, there is the earlier “we” that precedes the distinction of subjects and survives its oblivion.”⁶ These are the feelings that first arise in interactions between parents and children and then, beyond the family, one feels connection to persons in one’s groups of belonging. The intersubjective feelings we have toward each other are spontaneous. Thus, unpremeditatedly we aid the person who appears as though she is falling or we feel sadness when another person is crying. These feelings can be suppressed and ignored. However, they can arise whether or not we consider persons in our social orders to be family or members of the same community. Besides intersubjective feelings, there are also feelings as intentional responses to objects that are presented to consciousness. Such feelings that regard intentional objects can be reinforced through education. We will return to a consideration of this type of feeling below. For now, we can say that feelings toward our collaborators and the interactions that we have with them are paramount to the dramatic-aesthetic experience.

⁶ LONERGAN, *Method*, 57.

Dramatic-aesthetic experience is an engagement in a concrete collaboration that is part of an intelligible order of social interaction. In dramatic-aesthetic engagement, the participation is with the form of the situation in the concrete. This does not discount the unintelligibility or ugliness of the concrete form of life. Critical assessments of the concrete interaction among elements in the situation are addressed in judgments of value. It is an engaged participation rather than an objectification of the concrete collaboration. It is not as though one is witnessing events transpire passively, as when watching a movie. What we are participating in may be morally deplorable. When engaged in the common sense world-in-relation-to-me, without recourse to moral reflection on the good of the social order, we may just be appreciating and participating in a declining or harmful social order. Without a commitment to moral reflection made in moral conversion, dramatic-aesthetic appreciation is often based on one's common sense understanding of the concrete collaboration. Characteristic of such common sense understanding of situations is a narrowed knowledge of facts that are relevant to practically getting things done. That is, common sense intelligence cuts off questioning beyond what appears to be immediately relevant. The morally converted subject, however, has made a commitment to the dictates of a questioning moral interiority that seeks to find correct understanding of situations. Thus, morally converted subjectivity does not stop being curious about the situations in which it is part. This is essential for a true appreciation of the qualitative, aesthetic encounter with value.

1.3. Dramatic-Artistic Objectification of Dramatic Experience: Liberation of Experience and Intelligence for Imagining Possibilities of Living

Following a postulation of a dramatic-aesthetic liberation of experience, which is a participation in an intelligible good of order, we may also inquire into the possibility of a dramatic-artistic objectification as imagining, feeling and anticipating performance in a concrete

good of order. When the artist objectifies aesthetic experience, they are anticipating creating a concrete intelligibility in the artwork. They are free from the constraint of exact formulation and imagine new possibilities of form. I propose a parallel release of imagination and intelligence in a dramatic-artistic experience where one is free to imagine possibilities for action and their roles within the world. Practical intelligence is released from devising and formulating exact plans for attaining such possibilities. Here we are reminded of the play of childhood. Children imagine and play at being famous singers, race car drivers, doctors, parents. All sorts of roles are played at without the child understanding how they are situated within an intelligible good of order or what this order truly demands of the subject in that role. Still, the child is appreciating and enjoying her participation in a collaborative enterprise based in a dramatic-aesthetic apprehension of a good of order. As adults, we too can engage in dramatic-aesthetic experience where there is liberation from practical scheming or ethical deliberation so that experience can be open to and appreciate an intelligible good of order.

As we develop and learn our respective roles and how to fulfill them, such play and enthusiasm for collaboration experienced in childhood may give way to automation and dullness. Imagination and experience become habituated to get things done and to pursue largely predetermined courses of action. When experience is used for concerns other than experience itself, aesthetic experience is impossible. Hence, we can spend prolonged periods of time without aesthetic or a dramatic-aesthetic experience. The purity of such aesthetic experience is dependent on the release of experience from alien concerns and the release of intelligence from formulation. In ordinary living, we live out the majority of our days blending concerns that utilize experience to meet the demands of habitual routine. In order to pursue a dramatic-artistic experience, we must withdraw from the ordinary blend of experience and release intelligence from its practical

pursuits. This is because dramatic-artistic experience is an objectification of purely experiential engagement in collaboration with others. We step back from such an engagement and anticipate our dramatic activities in collaboration with others. We are free to imagine our activities and feel how such activities would play out. This is not to say that every dramatic-artistic experience will be a joyous release. We can equally formulate a dramatic-artistic scenario that is unpleasant and unenjoyable. Still, there is a release of experience and practical intelligence to formulate such dramatic ideas of collaboration.

Loneragan's treatment of art in *Topics* maintains the thesis that art awakens the subject to her artistic freedom to imagine new possibilities of living in a richer world. That is, a world beyond the ordinary, common sense world where life is seemingly automatic. Lonergan states:

Art is another case of withdrawal for return. The mathematician goes off into his speculations, but returns to concrete reality, to the natural sciences. Similarly, the artist withdraws from the ready-made world, but that withdrawal has its significance. It is a withdrawal from practical living to explore possibilities of fuller living in a richer world. Just as the mathematician explores the possibilities of what physics can be, so the artist explores possibilities of what life, ordinary living, can be. There is an artistic element in all consciousness, in all living. Our settled modes have become humdrum, and we may think of all our life simply in terms of utilitarian categories. But in fact the life we are living is a product of artistic creation. We ourselves are products of artistic creation in our concrete living, and art is an exploration of potentiality.⁷

The artist can and often does explore possibilities of form for ordinary living, but, this is the proper terminal activity of the dramatic pattern of experience in *Insight*. The dramatic-artistic moment of imagining possibilities for action in collaboration with others can be a moment of new creation. That is, it can be if we are not using our experience for imagining possibilities that we have imagined many times before or for other concerns besides self-creation and collaboration with others.

⁷ LONERGAN, *Topics*, 217.

Artistic objectification of concrete intelligibility is a withdrawal from ordinary living. Is there a dramatic-artistic objectification that is also a withdrawal from the routinized common sense world to discover new possibilities? The world of common sense is experienced in relation to the subject and her concerns and knowledge. We operate in this familiar world and rely on habits of experience, feeling, thought and action to navigate this world. In our dramatic artistry, we can withdraw from our habitual orientations and feelings and thoughts and pause in an objectification of the world of dramatic-aesthetic experience. In this way, the dramatic-artist objectifies dramatic-aesthetic experience that is an engagement in concrete and intelligible social orders. Unlike in dramatic-aesthetic engagement, in dramatic-artistic objectification, one is observing the concrete collaboration as though one is watching a movie. What one is “watching like a movie” in dramatic-artistic withdrawal could very well be collaboration in projects of harm and decline. In other words, the concrete and intelligible social order in which we are a part may not be good and may foster elements of decline. Thus, we need a turn to interiority’s moral reflection to judge the good of the situation and to discern the elements of progress and the elements of decline.

Moreover, without a commitment to moral interiority that is made in moral conversion, dramatic-artistic objectification is often based in our common sense understanding and caring about the world-in-relation-to-me. The difficulty is that we can base our activities on dramatic images without recourse to new understanding or reflection. Planning one’s activities and acquiring skills are not necessary for every instance of dramatic engagement. We can operate with relative ease without adverting to the use of new understanding or judgment about the worth of our activities. But, this gives rise to how the dramatic-artistic objectification may end up reinforcing old habits of living. Can this difficulty of falling into old habits and not pursuing self-

transcendence be addressed at the level of experience? I would say no. We need to make the decision to commit to moral self-transcendence and pursue it at the level of experience, understanding, reflection and decision.

From the foregoing analysis, one can get the impression that dramatic artistic moments are a rarity in ordinary living. Enjoyment and recognition of dramatic-aesthetic engagement may happen infrequently. As well, catching ourselves in the act of dramatic-artistic formulation may also be infrequent and difficult. However, imagining and feeling how our collaborations will play out is a common occurrence. Examples of dramatic artistic moments include imagining how a meeting with someone will go or how one will be received at a party. We can imagine whole conversations with others rich in feeling and expression. In other words, we anticipate social interaction in dramatic artistic moments. These moments are withdrawals from other concerns and ways of using experience. What we are most likely to be withdrawing from is a practically concerned intelligence that uses experience to get things done. In dramatic artistic moments, we are imagining and feeling for the sake of a collaborative enterprise.

1.4. Introducing Possible Worlds of Dramatic Setting

The character of the world one anticipates participating in according to one's dramatic ideas conditions the dramatic ideas themselves. Lonergan provides a catalogue of distinct worlds one can participate in by virtue of the concerns operative in one's consciousness. We are often situated in the common sense world oriented by a practical concern to meet the needs of experience. Our practical interest in the objects of this common sense world blends with our intersubjective feelings toward our collaborators. Our dramatic ideas are conditioned by these interests and feelings as we negotiate between them and our current desires. We can divide the common sense world's dramatic settings into the inner and outer drama of living. However, one

can choose a specific concern and allow it to unfold in one's consciousness to pattern experience and orient one in a horizon that is more expansive than one's common sense world. Drawing from Lonergan's catalogue of worlds opened up differing concerns, I will provide some characteristics of the anticipated worlds of dramatic artistic ideas. I will name them as following: the inner drama of living, the world of human values and God's world.

When we situate dramatic ideas in the inner drama of living, we are taking a stand with our ego toward the common sense world. We are positioning ourselves as the star of our dramatic performance and, by and large, we relate to our collaborators in terms of projected approval and disapproval for imagined actions. This world can range from a close approximation of reality to fantastical flights from actual interaction with one's collaborators. Lonergan cautions his readers about the dangers of fostering fantasy worlds for dramatic artistry outside the checks and balances of actual investigation and reflection done in social interaction. Regarding the "withdrawal from the outer drama of human living into the inner drama of fantasy,"⁸ Lonergan states:

This introversion, which overcomes the extroversion native to the biological pattern of experience, generates a differentiation of the persona that appears before others and the more intimate ego that in the daydream is at once the main actor and the sole spectator. Finally, the incomprehension, isolation, and duality rob the development of one's common sense of some part, greater or less, of the corrections and the assurance that result from learning accurately the tested insights of others and from submitting one's own insights to the criticism based on others' experience and development.⁹

To consistently withdraw into inner fantasy is to impoverish one's dramatic-artistic representations of the world and this limits one's ability to imagine possibilities for action that can become concretized. When one's imagined outlines for action cannot match up to concrete

⁸ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 214.

⁹ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 214-215.

performance, the subject suffers frustration at her lack of freedom. Moreover, without submitting her dramatic ideas for action to others, she becomes isolated and engagement in the actual drama of living becomes more difficult.

Withdraw into personal fantasy worlds can be a delight or reprieve from ordinary existence. However, these same withdrawals can cause us anxiety, fear or sadness. For example, we imagine an upcoming meeting going poorly or that others will not accept us or will make fun of us. Whether we are delighted or suffering from the imagined dramatic performance, it is not an engagement in the outer drama of living. These dramatic ideas situated in inner fantasies can actually prevent dramatic performance with others and in turn, prevent us from gaining experiences and insights that could aid in our performance. We also need others to correct our understanding of the dramatic situation and our plans and actions within it. Without actual collaboration with others, we are limiting ourselves through misunderstanding the situation and through shutting out the knowledge and beliefs of others. Moreover, we need the collaboration of other actors to achieve our particular desires and even our vocational goals. Inevitably, this means participating well in social orders that guarantee access to goods and are sustained and elevated by each participant's moral reflections.

One can also choose to follow one's intellectual concern and allow it to unfold in consciousness to pattern experience and orient one in a larger, universal horizon. Intellectual concern is experienced as wonder. As long as wonder is the dominant concern, experience follows its dictates along with the rest of the subject's activities towards a "spontaneous cooperation."¹⁰ In other words, when captivated by wonder, we work toward its satisfaction. In a sense, wonder is never satisfied. There are always further questions. However, we can make

¹⁰ LONERGAN, *Topics*, 86.

judgments of truth that close certain chapters on our quest for correct understanding. Though we may divert our attention away from wonder, the object of that wonder remains and the object of wonder is being. For Lonergan, wonder's correlative world is the universe:

The object of intellect is omnia, everything, and an object that includes everything is not restricted to any genus of things. That object must be being. And so, while concern has as its correlative a private world, the intellectual pattern of experience has as its correlative the one universe, everything.¹¹

Lonergan is referring to intelligence operating according to its own concerns and unfolding unhindered by bias. By contrast, when intelligence is operating in the common sense stage of meaning, we relate things to us and what concerns us is whatever arises in experience. We do not pursue further questions that would augment our understanding beyond the immediate situation. When operating according to the dictates of intellectual concern, we do not brush aside further questions that could augment our understanding. We want to know about some aspect of the universe. We are not satisfied until we reach a correct understanding and judge it to be true. One can draw a direct line between intellectual concern, its terminal activity in the judgment of truth and the interest in the universe to be known by asking questions and not brushing aside further relevant questions.

If the intellectual level of consciousness has its own concern, pattern of experience, terminal activity and world, then one might infer that there are parallels to these aspects that derive from the responsible level of consciousness. We have noted the absence of a distinctive notion of value in *Insight* that is subsequently developed and integrated into Lonergan's cognitional framework and featured prominently in *Method* as the operator at the fourth, responsible level of consciousness. Adding to the empirical, intellectual and rational levels of consciousness, Lonergan asserts:

¹¹ LONERGAN, *Topics*, 88.

There is the responsible level on which we are concerned with ourselves, our own operations, our goals, and so deliberate about possible courses of action, evaluate them, decide, and carry out our decisions.¹²

The responsible level of consciousness as found in *Method* is comparable to the intellectual level of consciousness in *Insight* and *Topics*. It is a level of consciousness with its own operator and proper concern; namely, value. While Lonergan does not ascribe to responsible consciousness a particular pattern of experience, its terminal activity involves all aspects of one's subjectivity toward judgments of value. In the same way that intellectual concern prompts spontaneous cooperation of one's activities, value concern prompts spontaneous cooperation of one's experience, understanding and judgment toward assessing and performing according to value. Does value concern head off toward a horizon correlative to the universe or a world beyond one's private world that could be shared by all if we engage in the operations of responsible consciousness? According to *Method*, when the subject is captivated by concern for value, the originating value is the human being making free choices among terminal values. One's world is a world of possible human values to be discerned, scrutinized, built-up. In other words, value concern orients one toward good self-making (originating value) and self-transcendence in the pursuit of maintaining or creating goods of order (terminal values).

Hence, besides the common sense world-in-relation-to-me, which can be divided into the outer drama of living and the inner dramatic world of the ego, there is the universe and the human world of values. In terms of our action in the world, the world of human values provides a more expansive dramatic stage for our artistry than the common sense world. However, Lonergan asserts that there is a larger world of values beyond the human and he refers to it as

¹² LONERGAN, *Method*, 9.

God's world. In *Method*, when one is in love with God, one's concern ceases to be limited to the human world of values.

Without faith the originating value is man and the terminal value is the human good man brings about. But in the light of faith, originating value is divine light and love, while terminal value is the whole universe. So the human good becomes absorbed in an all-encompassing good. Where before an account of the human good related men to one another and to nature, now human concern reaches beyond man's world to God and to God's world. Men meet not only to be together and to settle human affairs but also to worship. Human development is not only in skills and virtues but also in holiness. The power of God's love brings forth a new energy and efficacy in all goodness, and the limit of human expectation ceases to be the grave.¹³

When one is morally converted, the dramatic stage is a world of terminal values to be selected, worked toward, and maintained. When one is religiously converted, the dramatic stage is God's world. We become actors in God's drama. The world of terminal values and God's world gives the dramatic artist a larger and larger stage to view his dramatic performance in the concrete. How would this aid dramatic-artistic objectification? Would it lead to an attentiveness to one's performance as ethical and loving?

The difficulty involved in imagining a particular dramatic setting for our ethical performance and reflection is falling into the trap of overlaying onto concrete situations a false image of reality. If we want our dramatic ideas for action to become concretized in ethical performance, we must be attentive to the actual situation when drawing up our dramatic ideas. A main reason for this is to devise practically intelligent ways to fulfill our dramatic ideas. Moreover, without practical reflection, these plans may or may not be good. An image or picture of a dramatic setting of value populated by predetermined valuable acts of situations cannot grant an accurate way to conceive of value experience that can condition moral reflection in the concrete. That is, conceiving of a dramatic stage of value that aids in ethical reflection cannot be

¹³ LONERGAN, *Method*, 116.

constructed based on images alone. In the concrete, image alone is not a decisive factor for guiding and motivating ethical reflection or moral self-transcendence. What does motivate ethical reflection at the level of experience in the concrete? According to *Method*, we can experience feelings as intentional responses to values and such feelings can be based on one's intersubjective feelings. This is significant for our exploration of the dramatic pattern of experience's facilitating responsible and loving engagement. In the second part of this chapter, we will explore the possibility of incorporating intersubjective feelings and feelings as intentional responses to value into our conceiving of the dramatic setting that encourages experience of value in the concrete.

2. The Role of Feelings in Dramatic Setting and the Possibility of Dramatic Artistry in Morally and Religiously Converted Subjectivity

In this part of the chapter, we will explore the notion of dramatic setting as the world in which we image and feel towards the interactions among our actions with our fellow collaborators. The fundamental basis of our common sense feelings toward objects and collaborators are intersubjective feelings. Indeed, intersubjective feelings are an essential basis for the development of community bonds as well as value feelings. According to *Insight*, the intersubjective feelings of approval and disapproval particularly motivate our dramatic artistry in the common sense stage of meaning. Such feelings can lead to group biased practical reflections and decisions. I would like to explore the possibility that feelings as intentional responses to value can also motivate what one images as dramatic possibility of action.

To explore this possibility, we can refer to *Method*'s account of intersubjective feelings in their role of communicating intentional responses to objects. Using *Method*'s account of intersubjective feelings unfettered by bias allows for a more neutral position on the role of

intersubjective feelings in practical reflection. More significantly for our purposes, it allows for a further avenue of exploration in *Method*'s treatment of feelings as intentional responses to objects within moral reflection. Within moral reflection, feelings can intend objects apprehended as agreeable or disagreeable and they can intend objects that are apprehended as valuable. We will provide an account of the criteria for discerning the difference. We especially note that, for Lonergan, feelings as intentional responses to value select an object for which and for whom we would self-transcend. That is, we are driven to go beyond satisfactions and reflect on our actions as contributions to value. In this way, value feelings motivate ethical reflection and action. Such feelings can be transient and abiding. Most often, abiding feelings of value apprehend persons for whom we would self-transcend. The quintessential abiding value feeling for others is love. We are antecedently open to self-transcend for the sake of those whom we love and thus, we are willing to reflect and to choose value over-against satisfactions for the sake of our beloved.

I will offer that the feelings that most significantly and consistently condition our dramatic setting are abiding value feelings for persons. Yet, our feelings for our actions and collaborators can also be based in intersubjective feelings of approval and disapproval. We learn from our community of belonging through intersubjectively communicated feelings which pursuits are agreeable and which are disagreeable. We will discuss the education and self-discernment of feelings as a means to develop our dramatic settings for dramatic artistry. Through education and self-discernment of our feelings, we can develop the capacity to discern between feelings as intentional response to the agreeable and to value. Part of the commitment to value made possible by moral conversion is to develop the capacity to discern for oneself between feelings that intend value and those that intend the agreeable to the self. Through practice of and reflection on valuable acts, we can more consistently discern feelings that intend

value. This education and discernment of moral feeling reinforces the subject's ability to make decisions based on value.

However, intersubjectively communicated feelings of approval and disapproval can also lead to group biased decisions insofar as one performs actions based on these feelings rather than moral reflection. The danger is that group desires can override consideration of what is good beyond the intersubjectively sensed group. Consequently, dramatic artistic ideas of action can be informed by feelings that are responses to the agreeable according to the group. But, we will posit that dramatic artistry can also occur within a morally converted subjectivity that is committed to the pursuit of value. Such subjectivity is committed to go beyond the common sense world-in-relation-to-me and consider what is truly good. This involves consistently pursuing practical reflection that goes beyond the consideration of what is satisfying to the self-as-is and what is good for the group. Morally converted subjectivity is also committed to discerning between feelings as intentional responses to the agreeable and to value. We will consider the dramatic setting of the morally converted subject as diffuse with feelings for actions and persons for whom one would self-transcend. This is because moral conversion heightens one's ability to apprehend values and the value of other people.

In our concluding reflections, we consider dramatic artistry functioning within a religiously converted subjectivity. Religious conversion, as love and orientation to God, enables one to value a wider range of others and work toward the good despite the negative effects of decline. I will offer that both moral and religious conversion build up one's feeling capacity for values and thereby, widen the scope of dramatic artistry from imagining action solely in relation to one's intersubjectively sensed group. Specifically, these conversions prompt a wider range of whom one collaborates with and what one imagines collaborating for in dramatic action. Thus, in

our dramatic artistry, we can move from imaging collaborations with our intersubjective group to collaborations with those in projects of value to collaborations with God and everyone else as brothers and sisters.

2.1. Preliminary Note for the Exploration of Dramatic Setting: On the priority given to the role of feelings over images

The world in which we have dramatic experience is made up of the intentional objects, including persons, in which we have interest or have knowledge about. Like all existential horizons, we do not notice the dramatic setting as it is operative. This does not mean that we have no recourse to imagine what it would be like to operate in the world as though we are concerned with value. What would this world be like? We can imagine different settings for our dramatic performance that parallel the concern with value. How do we get a picture of what it looks like to dramatically perform in valuable ways? Can we get a picture that is based in and controlled by responsible interiority?

If we want to conceive of a dramatic setting that is based in an analysis of interiority, we must go beyond image alone and include an account of feelings. Pedagogically, imagining worlds of dramatic collaboration may come first, but, one must move past this “picture thinking” of worlds. We will explore the possibility that our feelings as intentional responses to objects condition the dramatic setting in which we image our dramatic activities. From the standpoint of interiority, we do not envision our worlds of dramatic interaction so much as feel the objects for the sake of which we would act. Image and feeling combine in the pattern or intelligibility to be grasped in the dramatic artistic moment.

I am suggesting that we give priority to feeling as intentional response over image in the remainder of this chapter. This is not to say that either feelings toward or images of persons and of actions are causally prior. Rather, image prompts feeling and feeling prompts image.

However, feelings are the “mass and momentum” of our cognitional activities and performance in the world. Without such feelings, our acts, including what we imagine, are “paper thin.”¹⁴ Moreover, feelings as intentional response to values are key elements in the drive to moral self-transcendence that necessarily involves reflection and action in the world. Feelings of value motivate us to pursue activities that transcend our desires of self and group interests. Insofar as they motivate moral reflection and action, feelings as intentional response to value are a key aspect in mitigating the biases of common sense that threaten the intelligibility and goodness of the social order. In this way, the kinds of feelings we have toward others, whether we are in our common sense world, a world of human values or God’s world, condition our care toward our collaborators and thereby, strongly influence with whom we imagine collaborating. Toward the end of this chapter, we will explore the possibility of moral and religious conversion augmenting the scope of one’s dramatic setting from the common sense world to the world of human values and to God’s world. However, we cannot proceed with this exploration without first understanding the essential role intersubjective feelings play in dramatic artistry in the common sense world.

2.2. Dramatic Artistry and Intersubjective Feelings in the Common Sense World

In the common sense world, the dramatic-artistic moment comes from imagining collaboration with the intersubjectively sensed group. According to *Insight*’s treatment of the dramatic pattern of experience, a central motivation for dramatic artistry is admiration and approval from one’s collaborators. Fixation on feelings of admiration and approval can lead to a fixation on group interests. However, intersubjective feelings need not lead to group interested decisions in all individuals and all times. We turn to a consideration of group bias and dramatic

¹⁴ LONERGAN, *Method*, 30-31.

experience in section 2.5. Here, we are establishing the role of intersubjective feelings operating in the common sense world in the dramatic-artistic pattern of experience. Specifically, I will refer to Lonergan's discussion of "fellow feeling" and "community of feeling"¹⁵ because they are the intersubjective feelings that communicate intentional responses to objects. As such, these feelings provide a link with our later discussions of intentional responses to objects within moral reflection. Moreover, fellow feeling and community of feeling also communicate to us what our collaborators approve of or disapprove of in the common sense world and these influence our dramatic ideas of collaboration.

According to *Insight's* treatment of the dramatic pattern of experience, when we are dramatically concerned, we have interest in the world of collaboration, our actions and interactions with our collaborators. We intersubjectively sense the actors as well as their reactions to the dramatic ideas that we have. In the common sense world, we relate things to ourselves in the dramatic pattern of experience and we anticipate performing in settings of civil society devised by practical intelligence. Through our intersubjective feelings toward our actions and our collaborators we can image patterns of interaction. Lonergan states:

The execution of his practical schemes requires the collaboration of others. Still, the network of man's social relationships has not the fixity of organization of the hive or the anthill; nor again is it primarily the product of pure intelligence devising blueprints for human behavior. Its ground is aesthetic liberation and artistic creativity, where the artistry is limited by biological exigence, inspired by example and emulation, confirmed by admiration and approval, sustained by respect and affection.¹⁶

Experience is not the same as understanding, but, in the dramatic pattern of experience one can participate in or imagine contributing to intelligible interactions with others. We have dramatic

¹⁵ LONERGAN, *Method*, 57-59. There are four means of intersubjective communication of feeling: (1) fellow feeling, (2) community of feeling, (3) psychic contagion and (4) emotional identification. Whereas the first two types of feelings result from an apprehension of an intentional object, the latter two do not arise from an apprehension of an intentional object. Instead, emotional identification and psychic contagion derive from a vital unity and not the cognitional order.

¹⁶ LONERGAN, *Insight*, 211.

ideas that seek fulfillment in performance. It is not image alone that motivates a desire in us to act. What is the feature of such dramatic images that anticipate and motivate the higher integration of common sense practical intelligence to formulate plans of action? Our dramatic ideas are comprised of feelings toward images whether newly constructed or based in memory of performance with one's intersubjective group. The feelings one has toward images are based in feelings that have been confirmed as admirable or approved of by others in one's interactions. For Lonergan, our dramatic artistry in the common sense world uses the criteria of feelings of approval and admiration stemming from the intersubjective group. Thus, I propose that in the dramatic-artistic moment, we often draw on intersubjective feelings towards objects to shape our dramatic images of action.

In *Method*, Lonergan distinguishes fellow feeling and community of feeling as two means of intersubjective communication of feelings. What is communicated about varying objects through these feelings can influence our images of action toward others. Lonergan states:

Both community of feeling and fellow-feeling are intentional responses that presuppose the apprehension of objects that arouse feeling. In community of feeling two or more persons respond in parallel fashion to the same object. In fellow-feeling a first person responds to an object, and a second responds to the manifested feeling of the first.¹⁷

In community of feeling, intersubjective collaborators feel the same way toward an object. Thus, a community can be happy about the new ice cream shop or sorrowful about the rise in cases of diabetes. In fellow feeling, one is feeling for another and not for the object that arouses the feeling in the other. For example, though your friend is sad about the state of the oceans, you feel sad for your friend. This feeling could prompt you to investigate the state of the oceans, but, you are more likely to be concerned with the state of your friend. From these intersubjective encounters, one learns about how one's community feels toward different objects. We learn

¹⁷ LONERGAN, *Method*, 58.

through the communication of intersubjective feelings that some objects garner approval and others garner disapproval. In our dramatic artistry, we can image actions (objects) for which we have intersubjectively apprehended our collaborators approval or disapproval (feelings as intentional response). To elaborate on the possible roles of feelings as intentional response to objects in the dramatic pattern of experience, I will explicate *Method*'s account of the difference between feelings as responses to agreeable objects and feelings as responses to values.¹⁸ We will also emphasize a further difference between value feelings as abiding and as transient. These distinctions will allow for more precision in our account of the significance of feelings within the dramatic pattern of experience.

2.3. Feelings as Intentional Responses to Objects: Feelings towards the agreeable or value and abiding and transient value feelings

Intentional responses given in feelings are a key aspect not only of our intersubjective relationships, but also of our deliberations and judgments of value. A judgment of value purports what is or is not good or better. We arrive at such judgments by correctly understanding the situation. At points between our correct understanding of the situation and our value judgments, we have feelings that are apprehensions of values. According to *Method*, "Intermediate between judgments of fact and judgments of value lie apprehensions of value. Such apprehensions are given in feelings."¹⁹ However, feelings may also apprehend or respond to intentional objects that are not values. Lonergan distinguishes between feelings as intentional responses to value and feelings as intentional responses to the agreeable or disagreeable.

¹⁸ For an analysis of feelings within Lonergan's ethical framework, see: Patrick H. BYRNE, *The Ethics of Discernment: Lonergan's Foundations for Ethics*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016). To my knowledge, my analysis does not contradict Byrne's findings. A further study could benefit from integrating Byrne's analysis with the study of the dramatic pattern of experience as presented in this work.

¹⁹ LONERGAN, *Method*, 37.

Feelings that are intentional responses regard two main classes of objects: on the one hand, the agreeable or disagreeable, the satisfying or dissatisfying; on the other hand, values, whether the ontic value of persons or the qualitative value of beauty, understanding, truth, virtuous acts, noble deeds.²⁰

Thus, there are objects presented to consciousness that motivate action toward the agreeable or away from the disagreeable. These are the objects that motivate us in the pursuit of current desires. However, there are objects that also motivate us to pursue value. Feelings as intentional responses to objects relate the subject to different types of objects including persons, dramatic experience's images of action, practical intelligence's devised courses of action, and needs or wants of any kind. Thus, one can have apprehensions of value as well as apprehensions of the agreeable and disagreeable.

How can we determine the difference between value feelings and feelings as intentional responses to the agreeable and disagreeable? The main difference that Lonergan points to is that value feelings motivate us to morally self-transcend. He asserts:

In general, response to value both carries us towards self-transcendence and selects an object for the sake of whom or of which we transcend ourselves. In contrast, response to the agreeable or disagreeable is ambiguous. What is agreeable may very well be what also is a true good. But it also happens that what is a true good may be disagreeable.²¹

There are two criteria that distinguish value feelings from feelings as intentional responses to the agreeable or disagreeable: (1) the feeling actually motivates us to morally self-transcend and (2) the feeling selects an object for whom or for which we would transcend ourselves.

Starting with the first criterion we can say that intentional responses to the agreeable or disagreeable evoke feelings that do not motivate us to transcend our current limits of moral knowing and activity. This is because the agreeable or disagreeable refer to objects desired by

²⁰ LONERGAN, *Method*, 31.

²¹ LONERGAN, *Method*, 31.

the self-one-is and not the more valuable self-one-could-be through reflection, decision and action based on consideration of value. It could be the case that agreeable feelings lead to worthwhile action, but, the feeling is in reference to one's current desires. One is not relating how the object so desired will lead to a better situation outside the attainment of desire. In comparison, value feelings relate to objects that may or may not be desirable to the subject-one-is.

However, the subject experiencing value feelings responds to objects with a moral desire that is stirred by the possibility or actuality of moral self-transcendence. Lonergan states:

For we are so endowed that we not only ask questions leading to self-transcendence, not only can recognize correct answers constitutive of intentional self-transcendence, but also respond with the stirring of our very being when we glimpse the possibility or the actuality of moral self-transcendence.²²

Through reflection on the situation and the course of action, the subject moves beyond the horizon of self-interest. She is beyond merely relating the goal of action to her desires. By performing actions that are truly valuable to the situation she also constitutes herself as a valuable actor. She is willing to self-transcend for the sake of participating in valuable collaborations. This leads to the second criterion of feelings as intentional responses to value.

In principle, the subject who morally self-transcends also selects an object for the sake of which she does this self-transcendence. Value feelings actually motivate ethical reflection by selecting an object for the sake of which we would pursue moral self-transcendence. These value feelings respond to objects presented to intentional consciousness that include not only particular courses of action, but also persons. According to Lonergan, "Apprehensions of value occur in a further category of intentional response which greets either the ontic value of a person or the qualitative value of beauty, of understanding, of truth, of noble deeds, of virtuous acts, of great

²² LONERGAN, *Method*, 38.

achievements.”²³ The key to value feelings is that they relate to intentional objects, including people that are not merely extensions of one’s desires. These feelings are related to persons, courses of actions, situations for whom and for which you would morally self-transcend.

We have seen that acts of moral self-transcendence proceed from reflection and evaluation on courses of action devised by practical intelligence. Without such evaluation, we cannot judge whether a proposed course of action is truly valuable. But, at the point that one is experiencing the value feeling, one is not knowing value or doing the valuable act. However, they are inspired to take the steps to reflect and act for the sake of the object. It is an object, if you will, that stands outside the current limits of the subject-one-is. It evokes a value feeling or moral desire that causes us to pursue it even if we currently find it disagreeable.

As noted in the above quotation, Lonergan points to value feelings that are evoked in relation to not only particular courses of action but also presentations of beauty, truth, understanding, noble deeds as well as persons as valuable in themselves. Persons who we value are persons for whom we would self-transcend. All persons are potentially originating values and as such are deserving of the same respect we give to all objects that we value. For Lonergan, “Personal value is the person in his self-transcendence, as loving and being loved, as originator of values in himself and in his milieu, as an inspiration and invitation to others to do likewise.”²⁴ But, we may not view or feel all persons to be valuable. That is, we may not feel inspired and invited to be valuable actors by all persons. Even so, we have loved ones. The people we love are those for whom we most consistently morally desire to self-transcend.

²³ LONERGAN, *Method*, 38.

²⁴ LONERGAN, *Method*, 32.

This leads us to a last distinction regarding feelings as intentional responses to values. There are transient and abiding value feelings. Both transient and abiding feelings can relate the subject to different types of objects including persons, dramatic images of action, practically devised courses of action, and needs or wants of any kind. However, the most frequent objects of abiding value feelings are persons. According to Lonergan:

[feelings as intentional responses to values] are not merely transient, limited to the time that we are apprehending a value or its opposite, and vanishing the moment our attention shifts. ... Here the supreme illustration is loving. A man or woman that falls in love is engaged in loving not only when attending to the beloved but at all times. Besides particular acts of loving, there is the prior state of being in love, and that prior state is, as it were, the fount of all one's actions. So mutual love is the intertwining of two lives. It transforms an "I" and "thou" into a "we" so intimate, so secure, so permanent, that each attends, imagines, thinks, plans, feels, speaks, acts in concern for both.²⁵

Thus, love for another is the primary example of abiding feelings as intentional responses to value. And feelings as intentional responses to values are possible in the dramatic pattern of experience in relation to our collaborators. We can also have value feelings toward our imagined activities, but, these responses are likely to be transient.²⁶ Deep and abiding feelings as intentional responses to value mostly have as their objects persons who we love. Persons are or can be the intentional objects that we value most. We are less likely to be aroused to moral self-transcendence by a particular image of an act than we are by a particular person or a group of people. In this way, persons most frequently evoke perceptible feelings of value. The people we love are those for whom we are most willing to self-transcend and images of our dramatic activity with them are recurrent.

²⁵ LONERGAN, *Method*, 32.

²⁶ A counter-example could be a subject's abiding value feelings toward activities related to career and role within the community. This line of thinking invites further reflection and discussion on the role of abiding value feelings toward one's vocation or life quest.

2.4. Dramatic Setting and the Education of Value Feelings

From the foregoing, we can more precisely state the features of the dramatic setting or world opened by dramatic artistry and the role that feelings play within it. Dramatic setting is not a stage we imagine, but more aptly can be understood as a series of objects for which, with whom and for whom we care enough to imagine acting. At times, what are presented to consciousness in dramatic artistic moments are transient acts that we relate to in feeling as agreeable or disagreeable. At other times, we image dramatic ideas that evoke feelings as intentional response to value. In the dramatic-artistic imaging of action we are inspired by transient feelings toward individual courses of action, but also, we are inspired by our deep and abiding feelings toward our collaborators. These feelings can be intersubjectively based or intentional responses to the agreeable/disagreeable or value. I am suggesting that the world of dramatic artistry is made up of objects that evoke our feelings of care toward action. And this dramatic world finds its most stable referents for our care in persons. Hence, our feelings toward our collaborators shape our dramatic artistic ideas of actions.

What I am proposing is that the feelings one has towards other collaborators significantly determines how one engages in the terminal activity of the dramatic pattern of experience. The activity of the dramatic-artistic moment is imaging activities in collaboration with others. The feelings we have toward others can arise spontaneously, but, they can also be developed, as in picked out, reinforced, and educated. In this section, we will offer an account of intersubjectively communicated feelings toward objects as a significant step in the process of the education and development of moral understanding. To develop one's capacity for moral understanding and knowing involves discernment of value feelings from feelings as intentional responses to the

agreeable according to self or group interests. In understanding this development of feelings, we can understand how we come to care about the people we engage with in our dramatic artistry.

Spontaneous feelings toward others may be based on the intersubjectively sensed “we.” Lonergan states, “Prior to the “we” that results from the mutual love of an “I” and a “thou”, there is the earlier “we” that precedes the distinction of subjects and survives its oblivion.”²⁷ This prior we of intersubjectivity is both “vital and functional”²⁸ insofar as we are spontaneously compelled to perceive, feel, and move for one another. Thus, we spontaneously save a person from falling or we move out of a person’s way. We can also communicate feelings intersubjectively as we have seen in the notions of community of feeling and fellow feeling. Our vital and spontaneous connection to others is at the foundation of human community. In our dramatic engagement, we spontaneously relate feelings, perception and movement to our collaborative partners. In our dramatic artistry, we image our actions in collaboration with intersubjectively sensed others.

Intersubjective feelings for others may arise spontaneously and pass away, but, they may also be deliberately picked out and reinforced through education. This education involves reinforcement through “advertence and approval, and they may be curtailed by disapproval and distraction.”²⁹ The development of the capacity to discern one’s feelings in cognition is largely a matter of studying the objects that arouse feelings. Feelings as intentional responses are attached to specific objects. Lonergan states:

Again, feelings are enriched and refined by attentive study of the wealth and variety of the objects that arouse them, and so no small part of education lies in fostering and developing a climate of discernment and taste, of discriminating praise and carefully

²⁷ LONERGAN, *Method*, 57.

²⁸ LONERGAN, *Method*, 57.

²⁹ LONERGAN, *Method*, 32.

worded disapproval, that will conspire with the pupil's or student's own capacities and tendencies, enlarge and deepen his apprehension of values, and help him towards self-transcendence.³⁰

Thus, feelings can arise spontaneously toward our collaborators through intersubjective feelings, but, they may also be deliberately reinforced. That is, they can be educated and curtailed for their ability to point to genuine goods.

Part of the development of feelings in moral living is the movement *from* communally generated feelings as intentional responses to the agreeable or disagreeable *to* self-discerned feelings as intentional responses to value. As children, we generally take our first steps out of the intersubjectively bonded community in the family and enter the practically devised social order of the school. We learn how to interact with others and communicate linguistically rather than intersubjectively. Through this process of withdrawal from intersubjective group to social orders within civil society, we acquire the tools for ethical living. With praise and approval we are taught to set aside our desires to fulfill our obligations. At first, these obligations are understood as rules. We accept these rules because of the authority of our guardians and teachers. As we develop in understanding and reflection, we realize the importance of some of these rules for the success of our functioning and of the functioning of the social order itself. It is the case that our successful functioning and rule following will still prompt approval from the group and we will feel validated in our actions. However, we may also begin to be inspired by our own feelings toward fulfilling obligation in the social order. We begin to discern within ourselves feelings that prompt our own sense of what is good to do and what is worthwhile to pursue. The development of the discernment of value feelings that point us beyond concern for our own desires conditions our ability to regularly opt for the course of action that contributes to social orders.

³⁰ LONERGAN, *Method*, 32.

2.5. Dramatic Artistry, Intersubjective Feelings and Group Bias

We can develop our capacity for the discernment of value feelings as distinct from the approval of our intersubjectively sensed group situated in the common sense world. A key aspect of such discernment is understanding how intersubjective feelings motivate and reinforce the images of dramatic action in collaboration with others. In the common sense world, one lives in structures practically devised by intelligence and with others as intersubjectively felt. Before advertence to the schemes of practical intelligence, there is the dramatic artistry that imagines action in collaboration with others. Though one's individual interests can circumvent the sense of community bonds and standards without feeling significantly attached to others or their feelings. Individual bias is an interference of intersubjective attachment by a practical intelligence set on short-term goals of personal satisfaction. But, without such individualistic interference, feelings that derive from participation in the intersubjective group motivate dramatic-artistic images of collaboration with others in the common sense world.

The feelings one gets as a result of approval and admiration inspire one to imagine possibilities of dramatic activity that fit in with the intersubjective group's feelings and opinions about objects and actions.³¹ Because these feelings arise as a response to objects that are presented to consciousness they belong to the class of feelings Lonergan calls, "feelings as intentional responses to objects." How can we determine if these feelings are intentional responses to value or to the agreeable/disagreeable? I offer that feelings based on intersubjective feelings toward objects are responses to the agreeable or disagreeable. They cannot be intentional responses to value without the addition of a selection of an object for the sake of which we would transcend our current moral understanding and activity. Even if one is responding in

³¹ It is difficult to pinpoint whether the image or the feeling comes first. This is because feelings prompt images and images prompt feelings. Feelings and images mutually reinforce one another.

feeling to how the intersubjective group feels toward the object, the feeling still derives from current self-understanding. We may image doing something for the sake of our group of belonging, but, this does not make the image or subsequent activity good. That is, these intersubjectively based feelings of approval are not the same as feelings as intentional responses to value. What one is responding to is approval or disapproval from one's group rather than an object that is good. This is the danger of group bias.

The dangers of group bias overshadow the positive aspect of intersubjective feelings toward others that can prompt action that is beyond one's particular desires for the good. Intersubjective feelings allow for spontaneous and mutual aid as well as prompt communal cohesiveness and unity when group decisions must be made. Here, intersubjective feelings toward others within the common sense stage of meaning can prompt a moral thrust to transcend current individual desires for the sake of social obligation. While we may not reflect on the good of the social order itself, we are engaging in acts of social responsibility. Fulfilling our obligations according to the role we have in social orders is a central aspect to responsible living. Understanding our role and obligations within these social orders can be easy. However, we can also misunderstand our role and obligations or not realize that we are part of social orders that require our active participation. This is especially the case if we do not feel a sense of connection with others in the social order. By "feel a sense of connection," I mean feeling an intentional response to the value of persons in the social order. When we do not feel for others, we are less likely to forgo our current desires to pursue obligations in the social order. The person for whom and with whom we feel nothing, we are less likely to endeavour to understand or value the social order in which we could be a part. In the stage of interiority, we are prompted not only by feelings as intentional response to the value of persons but also to the good of the social order

itself and our proposed actions within it. In contrast, we can rely on our intersubjective feelings in our common sense world to dictate our willingness to transcend our current individual desires for the sake of social obligation. Intersubjective feelings toward others within the common sense stage of meaning can prompt a moral thrust to transcend current individual desires for the sake of social obligation. But, fulfilling obligations to a social order is morally ambiguous insofar as the order itself can be in decline or harmful to others.

When it comes to fitting in with the intersubjective group, our dramatic artistry is likely to suit the needs of the group rather than be judged at the level of reflection as being truly worthwhile. When one is engaged in dramatic experience, feelings arise as a response to image rather than a course of action practically devised by intelligence. One has yet to work out if the dramatic idea is workable according to a practical intelligence that seeks to fit the plan into the situation according to one's skills and capabilities. Moreover, one has yet to reflect on whether the proposed course of action will likely lead to progress or decline for the good of order. Consequently, feelings that arise according to dramatic images at the level of experience are ambiguous. In this way, dramatic artistry based solely in images and feelings toward our intersubjective group can foster group bias in common sense living. This connection to group bias in common sense living could be a major stumbling block for conceiving a morally significant dramatic artistry. Thus, we must address this aspect of common sense bias if we are to conceive of a morally enabled dramatic artistry.

2.6. Addressing Group and General Bias in Dramatic Artistry with Moral Conversion: Towards conceiving dramatic artistry informed by value feelings

For Lonergan, group bias can only be addressed by a turn to ethical interiority to reflect on value over-against satisfaction and what is agreeable according to the group. This means stepping out of the common sense stage of meaning. However, the general bias of common sense

hampers the ability to step out of the common sense stage and into the stage of meaning of interiority. Thus, group bias is exacerbated by the general bias of common sense. To address both biases requires moral conversion as a transformation of our directionality toward the world such that we are committed to pursue value. The commitment to pursue value also entails the development of our capacity to discern value feelings. I will offer that moral conversion can widen the scope of persons with whom we image and feel collaborating with in our dramatic-artistic experiences.

How is group bias reinforced by the general bias? Common sense uses intelligence practically to devise ways to get things done to meet the needs of living according to one's experience and understanding. Because common sense intelligence is chiefly concerned with getting things done to meet the demands of experience as they arise, common sense is fixated on finding and implementing short-term practical solutions. Common sense understands things by relating them to what the self-as-one-is already knows and cares about. Thus, finding practical solutions means understanding the social order just enough to meet its demands while meeting one's own desires. One's desires are felt as agreeable or disagreeable. There is then a negotiation between one's current desires and the obligations of the social order. Common sense's general bias relates to the belief that it is competent for all tasks of understanding even those that are better served by other stages of meaning. But not all tasks are best served by common sense practical intelligence. One such task is moral reflection that is best done in the mode of interiority. In the mode of interiority, one asks and reflects on the value of courses of action. This means scrutinizing our plans as being truly good choices beyond what we currently desire. Moral conversion is the commitment to such scrutiny performed with the operations of responsible interiority in daily living.

The commitment made in moral conversion to turn to moral interiority more frequently in our lives is also a commitment to develop a sense of our moral feelings. This entails a commitment to developing the capacity to discern between intentional responses to the agreeable or disagreeable and our value feelings. One of the reasons that a morally converted person would endeavour to pursue such development of feelings is for the sake of being more attentive to value in concrete situations. Value feelings make the possibility of value more perceptible. Before understanding and reflection, there is attentiveness to the data. And, as we have stated, moral conversion also entails a commitment to fulfilling the dictates of reflection in the unfolding of moral interiority. This commitment to moral reflection involves stepping outside of our common sense worlds-in-relation-to-me to inquire into the value of social orders in which we are a part as well as their long-term orientations. The commitment also involves an openness to self-transcendence and a turning to interiority to understand, to evaluate and to judge the value of our actions within social orders. As we progress in our capacity for moral reflection and decision that actually lead to valuable action, we also have the opportunity to discern the value feelings that orient one toward such reflections and actions. Part of this discernment is realizing when feelings are pointing to the agreeable and when they are pointing to value. That is, moral conversion invites one to develop her feelings as intentional responses to value.

Without discernment of value feelings and reflection, intersubjective feeling toward other persons does not entail valuing these persons as ends in themselves. Persons may not be perceived as inspiring good behaviour and self-transcendence in us. Recall that it is for the sake of our collaborators in the drama of living that we are most frequently prompted to morally self-transcend and pursue value. However, if we do not feel connection with a group, we are more likely to allow our self-interest to dictate our devised course of action.

When we are morally converted, value feelings toward others are not the only means of inspiration that carry us to transcending our current desires. What also motivates us is the feeling or understanding toward the value we add to the situation and the value we add to ourselves. That is, in the actual fulfilment of the thrust of value, we are often transcending ourselves for the sake of contributing to the social order and its progress. Thus, value feelings in moral interiority are not just experienced as responses to other persons but to the good of social orders and their functioning. When a morally converted person is participating in a social order, she endeavours to work for the good of the order itself. No matter her feelings for her collaborators, she is committed to pursue the good for the social order and thereby, she endeavours to ask and reflect on whether her actions contribute to the progress or decline of the social order. Insofar as she asks, reflects and makes judgments concerning how her actions are valuable contributions to the order, she is pursuing moral self-transcendence.

How do these insights about moral conversion and feelings as intentional responses to value affect our account of the dramatic pattern of experience? In dramatic experience, there emerges a pattern of intelligible interaction of one's action among collaborators. When this intelligibility is informed by intersubjective feelings and the common sense stage of meaning, who one collaborates with is often for whom one happens to have intersubjective feelings or for whom one happens to have developed value feelings; i.e., those whom we have chosen to love. When the dramatic pattern is informed by moral self-transcendence, we can image and feel ourselves and our collaborators as valuable participants in concrete interactions for the good of the social order. By extension, we can perceive the inherent value of persons we collaborate with as also capable of self-transcendence through moral understanding, reflection and decision to contribute to the good of our social projects.

Thus, I propose a shift in the dramatic setting between intersubjective feelings and feelings as intentional responses to value. This shift involves the subject moving from dramatic imaging of actions with one's intersubjective group where the dramatic idea is inspired by feelings of approval from the group to a dramatic imaging of collaboration with others in social projects inspired by feelings as intentional responses to valuable people and images of noble deeds for the sake of the social order. Thus, moral conversion widens the range of types of activities for which we would give up current satisfactions and broadens the scope of persons for whom we would forgo our current desires. Notably, for our purposes, insofar as we develop our capacities for discernment of value feeling, we image and feel a broader range of persons with whom we would collaborate in our dramatic-artistic ideas. In imaging and feeling ourselves acting for the good of others within a social order, we are morally desirous to pursue practical understanding and reflection to achieve these dramatic ideas.

2.7. Concluding Reflections: Religious conversion and dramatic artistry in God's world

However, there is still the problem of liberation that affects the judgments and decisions of even the morally converted person. The problem of liberation is that we will perpetually lack the knowledge to know how to act and thereby, we need a willingness to learn how to act. However, we are not always willing to learn and thus, we also lack the needed antecedent willingness to develop knowledge and learn how to act. I propose a parallel incomplete development of feeling. This incomplete development pertains to the ability to discern between feelings as intentional responses to value and the agreeable as well as a general response to persons as valuable. This incomplete development of feeling is especially evident in our response to the value of persons for whom we would self-transcend. However, feelings are spontaneous and though they can be reinforced, the feelings we have toward other persons cannot be

immediately generated by us. We need time to develop value feelings toward others. In the meantime, our feelings are underdeveloped and thereby, our willingness to transcend our current desires are not developed for certain persons, especially strangers and those who are perceived as enemies. This suggests an incomplete development of feeling parallel to the incomplete willingness and knowledge involved in the problem of liberation. Thus, we act before we know how to act and we can act before we know how to feel to act toward others.

We discussed a need for a religious conversion that conditions an antecedent willingness to endeavour to love others. Through love of God, we are oriented to love each other even if we are concerned to get things done. When we love God, we think, decide and act for the sake of our relationship with God. Another way to think of God is as a person for whom we will self-transcend. Thus, the beginning of a life that seeks to realize religious values is the love for God that drives us to realize such religious values. One such value is loving all persons in the concrete. How? We can have feelings of admiration for others in our intersubjective group. We value our partners in collaborations of goods of order. We love our partners, our friends, our colleagues. But, what about the stranger or the one who does not belong? What about the enemy or the one who is not loved by us? God is a mystery and yet, we can personally relate to God. Part of the greatness of the mystery of God is that, though we cannot understand it, our love for God is a deep-set joy. By the strength of this love, we love all.

Loving all may appear difficult, but, we can start by relating to God as a collaborator in our dramatic artistry. We can begin to habitually image ourselves and feel ourselves interacting with God in our experience. According to Lonergan, faith is religious love experienced on the fourth level of conscious operation. One way to conceive of this is to situate it in our dramatic artistic experience. We can become habituated to engage in collaboration with God especially

because it is based on a captivating feeling of a powerful and otherworldly mutual love. This mutual love can become the basis of a confidence to overcome decline with acts of loving self-transcendence toward others. Thus, one “turns the other cheek” or forgives one’s brother or sister seventy-seven times.

Religious love can also reinforce the positive aspects of communal bonds in the common sense world as well as strengthen our ability to love persons as values in themselves. In our common sense worlds, where our neighbours are those we intersubjectively sense, we can draw on the strength of God’s love to treat all persons as our neighbour. Like the Good Samaritan, we can overcome intersubjectively based group bias that divides persons into those who belong and those who do not. We can overcome the indifference and lack of love for one another created by dividing “our group” according to categories of ethnicity, politics, economics, and nations. In other words, loving God tears down the categorical and emotional walls that section off persons for whom we would not be willing to transcend our current desires. Moreover, if we love all persons in our love for God, then we are affectively open to respond to persons as values-in-themselves. We are antecedently open to self-transcend for the sake of others and not just who we select according to our valuable projects or who we love. The main difference between moral and religious feeling responses to collaborators is that, when we are in love with God, we endeavor to feel love with and for all persons. This means being affectively open to transcend our current desires even for strangers and for enemies in the pursuit of the good. Additionally, in our love for God, we can desire to transcend ourselves even if we are not morally converted or have no recourse to moral theory.

In this way, religious love mitigates the effects of the common sense general bias because it orients the subject in the common sense world-in-relation-to-me beyond consideration of what

the self deems agreeable or disagreeable. The general bias of common sense exacerbates fixation on particular good because common sense relates all things to the self and puts intelligence to work on the practical attainment of satisfying demands of experience. These demands of experience are particular goods. They are good because they satisfy our needs and wants. However, to function in civil society, we must transcend our particular desires to fulfill our obligations in goods of order. Goods of order are schemes of social interaction that ensure access to the recurrent desires of groups of persons. The religiously converted subject endeavours to love others as a means to love God. This presents the possibility to genuinely love others who are not your partner, friends, family or anyone who is taken to be part of a valuable project of living. We are encouraged to love enemies and strangers. We have seen that love orients the subject to think and act for the sake of the beloved. In terms of moral interiority, we feel love for others as an intentional response to his or her value as persons. For the sake of these valuable persons, we are antecedently willing to forego our current desires and pursue courses of action that will contribute to the ongoing functioning of a collaborative relationship. These collaborative relationships are otherwise known as goods of order that ensure access to particular goods. Persons willing to transcend their current desires are capable of choosing courses of action that are truly valuable. In the case of religious love, one is antecedently willing to treat all persons as worthwhile enough to transcend one's present desires. Thus, religious love mitigates obsessive concern with meeting the current needs to self-satisfaction or falling under the suasion of group interest.

However, a religious conversion does not mean that one will automatically step out of the common sense world-in-relation-to-me and enter into the stage of moral interiority to, for example, reflect on the value of her courses of action. While religious love enables the

commitment to love all persons, it does not replace the need to develop moral interiority. The development of moral interiority makes one more and more competent to do that which religious love intends; namely, living to contribute to the good of situations through one's actions.

Lonergan expresses this intimate connection between moral interiority and the orientation of love when he states, "by deliberation, evaluation, decision, action, we can know and do, not just what pleases us, but what truly is good, worthwhile. Then we can be principles of benevolence and beneficence, capable of genuine collaboration and of true love."³² What it takes to be genuine collaborators and capable of true love is not only feelings but also moral reflection about the goods of order that require us to transcend "what pleases us." To contribute to the good of order, we still need to develop knowledge of situations as well as knowledge of possible outcomes of our actions. Likewise, responsible interiority involves developing our competency for discerning the difference between value feelings and feelings as intentional responses to the agreeable and disagreeable. This implies actually deciding to pursue value over satisfactions. Hence, developing responsibility interiority requires willingness to transcend our current desires for particular goods to pursue obligations and activities in goods of order. To make sure we promote the stability and the progress of our social worlds, there is need of willingness to submit these goods of order to reflection and criticism. These dispositions and activities that promote responsibility and progress of goods of order require moral interiority and yet, they are best motivated out of love for God that makes us antecedently willing to self-transcend for the sake of others.

³² LONERGAN, *Method*, 35.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

We conclude this work with a summary of its arguments relating how they contribute to clarifying the problem of ethical abnegation as well as how they offer responses to the problem. At the end of this summary, we will draw particular focus on how our treatment of the dramatic pattern of experience relates to the overarching goal of these chapters: identifying the features of ethical abnegation and offering solutions that can promote serious ethical reflection. The second part of this conclusion offers avenues of further study that utilize elements of the present work. In particular, we offer that our treatment of the dramatic pattern of experience can allow for building bridges of communication within theological ethics and aesthetics.

1. The Problem of Ethical Abnegation: Ethical, Theological and Dramatic Solutions in Dialogue with Ethical Interiority

In this project, we used a method of problem and response to explore the issue of ethical abnegation. We defined ethical abnegation as disengagement from serious ethical reflection. Serious ethical reflection attempts to ask and answer essential questions: “What should I do?” and “Is this good to do?” These questions arise spontaneously and are a constituent of daily life. Answering such questions involves formulating courses of action and reasoning about values that direct our activities. Abnegation of our ethical capacities entails choosing the courses of action that are easy, familiar, unquestioned and narrowing consideration of reasons for our plans to short-term or personal preference. The main position of this project is that ethical theory ought to promote ethical reflection and mitigate the problem of ethical abnegation. From the standpoint of this position, we treated the work of MacIntyre, Taylor and Lonergan in chapters two, three and

four respectively. In their own way, these authors identify elements in ethical theory that can foster the problem of ethical abnegation and they offer responses to the challenge.

In chapters two and three we offered MacIntyre and Taylor's accounts of the historical development of the conditions that allow for emotivist and subjectivist moral theories. Such theories offer a view of ethical reflection as the discovery of preference and the means to assert these preferences. Drawing from their critiques of emotivism and subjectivism, we posited that ethical theories based on these positions can sustain a cultural climate that accepts and even promotes ethical abnegation. Insofar as ethical theory allows for principles of emotivism and subjectivism to go unchallenged, it promotes a narrowing on preference in practical reflection and manipulation in the social sphere. For MacIntyre and Taylor, answering our own ethical questions requires more than mere discovery of preference. Reasoning about our actions in light of social goods and personal values is essential to living virtuous and authentic lives.

MacIntyre and Taylor offer correctives for the current state of ethical theory that could encourage and facilitate serious reflection about social goods and values. In chapter four, we scrutinized whether the tools to fulfill these correctives are available within their thought. For Taylor, ethical theory ought to articulate the requirements of the ideal of authenticity beyond the fulfillment of preference. To fulfill its requirements, it is necessary to engage in reflection about the reasons for our action and the values we strive to socially build together. This requires us to remain open to horizons of significance beyond the self and to engage in dialogue with others about reasons for choices about goods. However, Taylor lacks a theory of the human person that is complemented by an adequate framework for explaining ethical reflection or why a person would choose to strive for the higher ideal of authenticity. MacIntyre offers an Aristotelian virtue ethic framework that explains how ethical reflection about goods and standards operates.

However, for this framework to function, it would require the establishment of practices that allow for the attainment of virtue, standards and objective reasoning about goods.

As we established in chapter four, Lonergan's account of responsible interiority is based on an intentionality analysis that provides a methodological tool for developing one's abilities for serious ethical reflection. The subject can draw upon the theoretical account of responsible interiority through a method of self-appropriation. Development of knowledge of one's ethical interiority allows for authentic acts of knowing that follow the dictates of one's responsible consciousness. For Lonergan, authentic subjectivity allows for genuine objectivity. Following the dictates of responsible consciousness allows the subject to evaluate the worth of courses of action in light of the progress of patterns of cooperation and the development of the self. With value judgments and worthwhile actions, one performs an act of self-transcendence. That is, one is consciously and responsibly making oneself into a better person. In this way, to pursue self-transcendence and pursue value over satisfaction is a means to become an authentic, responsible human being.

Still there is the challenge of stepping out of the common sense stage of meaning to consider and self-appropriate one's ethical interiority. This challenge was first presented within the treatment of Lonergan's three stages of meaning. We presented the tensions that arise from the stages of meaning of theory, common sense and interiority. Common sense relates all objects, including experience and new information, back to the self-as-one-is. Theory endeavours to relate objects to one another without relying solely on the self-as-is. Conflicts between the stances, languages and judgments of common sense and theory can give rise to an ethically troubled consciousness. As a result, subjects frequently opt out of theoretically understanding ethical positions in favour of common sense positions. One of the dangers of this is that ethical

theory becomes a weak force in correcting the common sense perceptions of ethical reflection. Lonergan's solution to troubled consciousness is the development of interiority that allows subjects to understand that the two stages of meaning of common sense and theory derive from the same subjectivity. With the development of these three stages of understanding, one can become equipped to navigate between common sense and theory.

Though the common sense stage of meaning is an essential component of practical living and of functioning within civil society, it leaves practical intelligence and reflection about actions prone to bias. We discussed three biases of common sense in chapter five; namely, individual, group and the general bias of common sense. These biases stem from the standpoint of common sense that refers all things back to what the self knows and cares about. In the interests of the self, individual bias limits practical intelligence to seek self-satisfaction over-against what is good for the group. Group bias prohibits questions pertaining to what is good beyond what the group desires or expects. The general bias refers to the stance that common sense is competent in all matters of understanding and reflection. We noted that Lonergan's account of the general bias of common sense offers a further reason why subjectivist and emotivist theories are accepted as viable accounts of ethical reflection. In brief, common sense is ordinarily the stage of meaning in which subjects engage and hence, practical reflection often amounts to discerning what is preferable or agreeable to the self-as-is.

One of Lonergan's solutions to the general bias of common sense is to refer subjectivity to the process of moral conversion. Through a turn to interiority and the method of self-appropriation, one can begin to notice and gain more experience with engaging with value. Experiences with value can initiate a transformation of the subject's horizons such that she is

committed to pursuing value. This entails that she actually chooses valuable courses of action over those that would satisfy her current desires.

However, as established in chapter five, moral conversion does not mean perfection. There are the challenges of perpetual moral impotence and the reflection on this perpetual state Lonergan names the problem of liberation. The problem of liberation presents itself to all subjects whether morally converted or not. We do not always know how to be good before we act. We can choose a course of action that is not good for the situation or for ourselves. Though we may be limited in our knowing how to do the good, we also lack an antecedent willingness to learn how to be better knowers and deciders for the good. Despair over our moral impotence exacerbates the problems that arise due to our irresponsible acts. Such despair orients us away from a willingness to learn about how to act for the good. We can give into the thrust of moral impotence and begin to settle for the self-as-is or decline in the social order. In other words, despair over the problem of liberation can prompt ethical abnegation.

As noted in chapter six, for Lonergan, the only solution to the problem of liberation and the moral despair it engenders is God's grace and our working with God in religious conversion. Through God's grace, we undergo the transformations that allow orientation to the proper object of our affective, intellectual and volitional desires. These transformations initiate a reorientation of our horizons toward God and this is religious conversion. Within this new religious horizon, the chief concern is a love for God. When one is in love, she thinks, desires, acts for the sake of her beloved. The religiously converted person is willing to morally self-transcend for the sake of her loving relationship with God as transcendent goodness.

With the introduction of theological categories in chapter six, we went beyond the philosophical dialogue with MacIntyre and Taylor. Though these authors are open to theological

horizons in their work, they do not draw on its categories to engage in ethical theory. Consequently, their critiques of emotivism and subjectivism lack an essential component. It was noted that the subject who seeks after preference rather than what is truly good is not just selfish; she is also working against the orientation of her ultimate fulfillment in absolute goodness, God. Indeed, any strictly philosophical discussion of the problem of ethical abnegation will lack an accounting of the central solution to overcoming moral despair in the face of the problem of liberation. The gifts of faith and hope allow for the confident expectation that our good efforts will lead to the improvement of situations. Moreover, the gift of one's love for God, charity, dismantles the almost obsessive self-referencing of the common sense stage of meaning. This mitigates the effects of an underdeveloped willingness to do for others that is a chief component in the problem of liberation. Though we may not be utterly free to know and to choose the good in all situations, we may be granted an open willingness to care for others. Feelings of love for God augment one's willingness such that she is open to go beyond self-interest to care for others. In the concrete collaborative situation, such an open willingness to care for others allows for the unfolding of practical intelligence to construct plans of action that benefit others rather than the self.

Beyond ethical interiority and moral conversion, there is theology and its categories that allow Lonergan to assert the solution to the problem of liberation. The solution is God's grace and an unfolding of a religious conversion where religious love acts as an orienting concern. However, this presented the challenge that charity acts as only one possible orienting concern among the varying concerns of polymorphic consciousness. We noted a parallel difficulty with maintaining a concern for value in chapter five. Beyond the biases of common sense, the varying concerns of polymorphic consciousness divert one's interest away from pursuing value. In

chapter six, we posited that charity can also be said to act as an orienting concern within the varying concerns of polymorphic consciousness. We noted that the notion of perfect charity refers to a subjectivity that is continually oriented by one's love for God. Such a highly developed religious subjectivity is capable of discerning how to act for the good through his feelings as intentional responses to values. In perfect charity, one is capable of utilizing his feelings as a trustworthy criterion of value decisions. Still, for those who are working toward perfect charity, religious love acts as one orienting concern among many in the common sense stage of meaning.

Within the common sense stage of meaning, the multiple concerns of experience divert attention away from loving and value concern and thereby, one is prone to biased decision making. Consciousness operating in the common sense world-in-relation-to-me uses practically concerned intelligence to meet the demands of the concerns of experience as they arise. These demands of experience include the biological, practical, intellectual, mystical, artistic and dramatic. As we noted, many of these demands must be fulfilled if we are going to survive. The biological demand to sleep or the practical demands to fulfill social obligations are essential for our ordinary living. However, such demands can draw our attention away from value and from charity. Furthermore, in the common sense stage of meaning, our intelligence becomes preoccupied with practically meeting immediate demands in efficient and familiar ways. Thus, not only is consciousness in the common sense stage of meaning susceptible to preoccupations with self and group interests, it is also susceptible to being overly concerned with practically meeting the demands of experience as they arise. We posed the challenge: how is it possible for religious love, which coincidentally orients one to the good, operate in ordinary experience in the common sense world?

In chapter seven, we provided an account of the dramatic pattern of experience as a specific withdrawal from common sense practicality within ordinary experience. We saw that ordinary experience includes a number of different modes of experience that are frequently blended together. However, within this blend, one of the dominant modes is the dramatic pattern which often stamps ordinary life with its own distinctive artistry that can be identified as recurring often through the course of our daily lives. Like other patterns of experience, the dramatic pattern was explicated as having its own distinctive concern and terminal activity. Its distinctive concern is with the drama of living in collaboration with other actors. And its terminal activity is envisioning forms of action and interaction in collaboration with others with respect to one's role and character. Understanding the dramatic pattern does not provide all the ingredients required to understand all aspects of ordinary experience. However, when we withdraw from the blend and focus our understanding on the distinctive characteristics of the dramatic pattern itself, we gain an understanding of central recurring features that can prove helpful. In particular, we argued in chapter eight, that it can prove helpful in understanding how moral conversion and religious conversion typically operate as correctives to the limitations and biases of common sense throughout the course of ordinary experience.

Lonergan's framework of polymorphic concerns of experience allows for a heightened awareness of the different patterns of experience and their terminal activities. This is another dimension of Lonergan's work that can be brought into dialogue with MacIntyre and Taylor's shared project of challenging ethical theory to provide better and more accurate tools for subjects to engage in serious ethical reflection. Through the freedom of the selection of concerns that orient consciousness toward different terminal activities, we can select the dramatic pattern of experience and so allow it to unfold toward imaging collaborations with others. This allows us to

further address the challenge of the tensions between stages of meaning as presented in chapter four. Lonergan offers that a heightened awareness of one's cognitional activities allows for both an understanding of the basis of different stages of meaning but also the capacity to move back and forth between the stages. Our discussion of the dramatic pattern of experience adds further dimension to Lonergan's framework of polymorphic consciousness. Not only can we move back and forth from the common sense stage of meaning to ethical theory we can also move back and forth from ordinary experience to the dramatic pattern of experience. This allows for the possibility that an essential and recurrent concern of ordinary experience can be picked out and fulfilled in the course of ordinary living. We are free, through the selection of concern that orients experience and intelligence, to imagine possibilities of collaborative interaction with others.

In the first part of chapter eight, we argued for the possibility that the dramatic pattern of experience can work with value and foster responsible engagement. It was offered that we can enjoy value or be repulsed by disvalue in the concrete social order in dramatic-aesthetic experiences. We also posited a dramatic-artistic withdrawal from the blend of ordinary experience. In these moments of dramatic artistry, our practical intelligence and experience are free to imagine different possibilities of action in collaboration with others. We noted that without a concern for value and the operations of responsible interiority, dramatic-aesthetic experiences and dramatic-artistic withdrawals cannot initiate valuable actions. Valuable action requires a turn to serious ethical questioning in the stage of interiority. Engagement in responsible interiority allows us to know about the concrete situation as well as evaluate courses of action in terms of how they will positively affect the concrete situation.

The second part of chapter eight argued that it is possible for dramatic artistry to integrate value feelings that prompt us to engage in morally self-transcendent action. Dramatic artistry draws on images and feelings to construct its outlines of action. We argued that the dramatic setting for these outlines is a horizon inspired by feelings toward objects including persons. We offered that it is possible for our dramatic artistry to incorporate value feelings that prompt morally self-transcendent action especially in the morally converted. Moral conversion, with its commitment to value and engagement in responsible interiority, involves development of the discernment of feelings as intentional response to value. Moreover, moral conversion reinforces the commitment to opt for valuable actions over group interests. This is especially relevant for our dramatic artistry because it often draws from intersubjective feelings of approval from groups of belonging to outline action. We argued that moral conversion, with its development of the discernment of value feelings, widens the scope of persons one images collaborating with, beyond self and group interest, for the sake of value.

I argued that being in love with God also widens the scope of persons one images as collaborators in dramatic-artistic moments. The love for God active in the dramatic pattern of experience enables a willingness to do for others even when operating under the sway of the general bias of common sense. That is, loving God in the pattern of relations of one's dramatic artistic representations enables a consideration of others and one's actions beyond current desires. Moreover, moving away from concern with only one's intersubjective group toward love of God can in turn drive one to break out of the fixation on practical and short-term solutions for the sake of one's attainment of particular goods. In our abiding love for God, we desire to contribute to the social order for the sake of other participants even if we are still functioning within the common sense world-in-relation-to-me. In the concrete instance, we may not be able

to intellectually or theoretically understand the social orders in which we are a part. We may not even be able to interiorly reflect on the true worth of our actions. But, in our love for God in the dramatic and concrete instance, we are called lovingly beyond ourselves to contribute to the social order and the good of others.

The dramatic pattern of experience can incorporate self-transcending feelings and can function within religious conversion and its existential orientation toward love of God in order to enable us to care about and to value the other beyond one's intersubjective group of belonging and those whom we have selected. However, this does not guarantee that this will be followed by the reflective acts of responsible consciousness. The religiously converted individual still requires the development and use of responsible interiority to construct informed plans of action and to evaluate these plans in terms of the value added to the situation. Such plans and evaluations can be based in the common sense stage of meaning such that responsible interiority does not unfold toward judgments of value. Still, the motivation to love God through one's responsible acts remains a central solution to the problem of moral despair in the face of our own limitations. The subject is encouraged to strive after the good in situations despite her own moral impotence by the strength and the call of God's love.

2. Further Research: Engaging with Theological Aesthetics and Ethics

In chapter seven of the present work, we offered that our analysis of the dramatic pattern of experience could serve to provide tools for communication between theological fields. Here, we will point to the field of theological aesthetics and recent conversations that offer to bridge the gap with ethics. In particular, we will introduce the work of Christopher Steck and Melanie Susan Barrett. Their common project is to offer Balthasar's theological aesthetics as a tool that ethical theory can provide for the encouragement of ethical reflection. They present compelling

cases for how engagement in theological aesthetics heightens one's motivation to act for the good. However, they point to the limitations in Balthasar's thought for providing tools of ethical reflection. For the purposes of offering further research avenues, I suggest that Lonergan's framework for the polymorphism of consciousness presents itself as a resource to relate the theological aesthetics of Balthasar and Lonergan's ethical theory.

Lonergan's treatment of grace in relation to the problem of liberation contains suggestions of the necessity of religious symbols to awaken the sensitive psyche to the movements of love for all and align it with the orientation of the will and intellect toward unconstrained cooperative inquiry and action. Robert M. Doran's work on "psychic conversion" focuses on this suggestion and related aspects of Lonergan's thought.¹ He argues that Lonergan's cognitional philosophy needs a complementary emphasis on the sensitive psyche as the "esthetic and dramatic operator of human integrity and artistry."² Acknowledging and familiarizing oneself with the psyche requires the images and symbols that awaken its movements. Although Lonergan's cognitional framework allows for such a development, Doran argues that Hans Urs Von Balthasar's theological aesthetics and treatment of the "Theo-drama" provides a more developed account of how specifically Christian categories drawn from the tradition's repertoire of symbols have an impact on the dramatic artistry of everyday life.

Following Doran, Lonergan's framework invites an exploration of the role of aesthetics in mediating a theological response to the problem of ethical abnegation. Steck's *The Ethical Thought of Hans Urs Von Balthasar* is a sustained account of the applicability and import of

¹ Robert M. DORAN. *Subject and Psyche* (2nd rev. ed., Milwaukee: Marquette University, 1993) and *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations: Towards a Reorientation of the Human Sciences* (Chico: Scholars, 1981).

² Robert M. DORAN. "Lonergan and Balthasar: Methodological Considerations." *Theological Studies* 58 (1997): 61-84. Citation, 68.

Balthasar's theological aesthetics for Catholic moral theory.³ Central to this account is Balthasar's claim that faith is awakened and sustained in persons by an encounter with God's glory made manifest in history. The apex manifestation is the God revealed in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Love is here revealed in its absolute perfection within the triune relations of the Father, Son and Spirit. Encountering this revelation is like encountering beautiful objects that are attractive and draw one's attention beyond the self. Yet, the paschal event is not just another object of beauty. It is the most glorious manifestation of the Lord to which all other encounters with beauty can only fail to imitate. The perfect, self-sacrificing love reveals itself to the person and invites the response of a self-surrendering praise of its glory.

Through growth in faith, prayerfulness and church interaction, the core revelation of God's triune love becomes increasingly the lens by which the Christian perceives the world and acts within it.⁴ Balthasar's concept of mission suggests how the whole shape of a Christian's life can be modeled on the revelation of the cross. As the Son is sent on a mission by the Father to witness and bring into the world the law of love, so too is the Christian sent on a mission by the Son to perform a role within the world's struggle to love God and neighbour. This participation in the divine drama of salvation is made possible by the very event that awakens faith, namely, the loving act of the Son and the sacrifice of the Father. Through the Spirit we are taken up into the mediating love between Father and Son. And this Spirit works always to restore the love that is not present in the world. The individual mission of each Christian is founded on and directed

³ Christopher W. STECK, S.J. *The Ethical Thought of Hans Urs von Balthasar*. (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 2001). This paragraph refers to, Steck, *The Ethical Thought*, 1-33.

⁴ STECK, *The Ethical Thought*, 62-92.

toward the promise of a loving world as one waits for the total fulfilment of this promise through the second-coming.

Steck is critical of Balthasar's thought for its inadvertence to moral reasoning in the fulfilment of a mission directed toward loving God and neighbour.⁵ Yet, he commends Balthasar's theological thought for its ability to provide a description and explanation of Christian conduct situated within an encompassing schema that enables participation in ultimate meaning. In this way, Steck contends that Balthasar offers a rich framework for theological morality despite its lack of a method for grasping the finite good. He suggests that the moral reasoning a Balthasarian account of morality lacks can be filled in by a wide variety of philosophical frameworks, such as an ethics of utility or virtue. Although there is a methodological gap, it can be filled in at any point by any framework of moral reasoning without undermining Balthasar's description and nature of Christian conduct.

In *Love's Beauty at the Heart of Christian Moral Life*, Melanie Susan Barrett builds on Steck's project to offer the English-speaking world a Balthasarian ethics.⁶ Whereas Steck argues for its close approximation to a divine command ethics, Barrett argues that a Balthasarian ethics is best conceived within a virtue ethics where love is the central virtue. One of the principle challenges Barrett addresses in *Love's Beauty* is the methodological gap of moral reasoning in Balthasar's thought.⁷ Drawing upon the Aristotelian ethical principle that one ought to model one's conduct on excellent exemplars, Barrett asserts that Jesus of Nazareth is the model of Christian conduct for a Balthasarian virtue ethics.

⁵ STECK, *The Ethical Thought*, 150-160.

⁶ Melanie Susan BARRETT, *Love's Beauty at the Heart of the Christian Moral Life: The Ethics of Catholic Theologian Hans Urs Von Balthasar*. (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2009), 6.

⁷ BARRETT, *Love's Beauty*, 260-302.

Despite culling five principles for Christian conduct from Balthasar's christology, Barrett concludes that his thought lacks the resources to develop a framework for moral reasoning that would guide Christians to choose between goods. Principle among these choices is the option between actions that regard loving self and loving others in particular circumstances. For Barrett, the principal weakness of Balthasar's philosophical anthropology is that it lacks an account of legitimate self-love. An account of this kind would be the only way to offset the excessiveness with which Balthasar asserts the centrality of self-sacrificing love for the Christian life. With less precision, Barrett asserts the need for a developed practical philosophy within a Balthasarian ethics. Balthasar did not do practical philosophy, but he also did not identify himself as an ethicist either. For Barrett, however, if a Balthasarian ethics is to succeed it needs to develop a practical philosophy that can provide more principles for Christian conduct than the one's Balthasar suggests.

The advantage of the foregoing accounts of Christian aesthetic symbolic-schemas for ethical inquiry is that they add an emphasis on participation in an enveloping interpretive lens of communal interaction. These symbolic-schemas allow for the felt participation in a worth-while communal enterprise that motivates and focuses one's attention on the larger goals of love and justice. Participation in these schemas addresses the need for a motivating vision of the ideal of loving cooperation in amongst the daily causes for despair that engenders ethical abnegation. By engaging aesthetically with these symbols in daily life it is supposed that the individual and group would begin acting within and for a love and justice oriented schema of world community. This supposition is largely based on aesthetic-symbolic theories of truth and goodness. In this way, Balthasarian scholars highlight and provide justifications for the positive role aesthetic engagement can play in theological ethics.

However, their theories are missing a framework for moving back and forth between a focus on the aesthetic and the moral in daily life and they are missing an interiority-based method that would provide an account of the grounds for such a theory. Lonergan's theory of polymorphic consciousness offers such a framework⁸ and I offer that our analysis of the dramatic pattern of experience provides a model for developing linkages between ethical reflection and the aesthetic and artistic patterns of experience. Ethical theory would be remiss to exclude the importance of aesthetic encounter and symbolic meaning. Yet, the contemplation on symbolic-schema cannot substitute for the processes of ethical deliberation that include ascertaining the finite good and directing one's reasoning for actions toward communal justification and agreement. If the processes of ethical reasoning and aesthetic encounter are both needed in an account of theological ethics, then there is need for a broader theory for understanding the polymorphic nature of conscious engagement with the world. Both means of engagement are necessary to awaken and channel the loving concern for others in actions carried out on a daily basis. Understanding and relating the roles of ethical and aesthetic engagement will contribute to understanding the role of theology in mediating a response to the challenge of ethical abnegation presented in this work

⁸ On "polymorphic consciousness," see, especially, Lonergan, *Insight*, 196-231; 410-415. And LONERGAN, *Topics*, 208-232. See also: Gerard WALMSLEY, *Lonergan on Philosophical Pluralism: the Polymorphism of Consciousness as the Key to Philosophy*. (Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

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