The Catholic School: Dualistic Learning Superseded

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Abstract

The Catholic school today in general struggles to maintain its religious mission even though its academic record remains commendable. This reflects a dualistic framework where the school's science curriculum is preponderant. To regain a holistic perspective, it is argued that the school needs to adopt a critical realist perspective on learning which the philosopher, Bernard Lonergan, developed. It will be contended that Lonergan's perspective has potential to redeem the Catholic school's religious identity allowing it to be more effectively inclusive of its confessional agenda, a model of which is outlined.

Introduction

Studies on the Catholic school leave us with a spectrum from James Arthur's holistic version where the school operated as a direct instrument of conversion to Catholicism to his dualistic and pluralistic models as the Catholic school strives to serve both religious and secular agendas (Arthur 1995, 225-227). With an increasing prominence of the dualistic model, the religious and secular are separated as school assemblies, liturgy, and religious events appear to have little relevance to the teaching of science. The church's religious mission is progressively distanced from its secular practice.

One wonders how, in such a setting, students who move from a Physics to a Religious Education class appreciate the different spheres of knowledge, where the study of religion is almost certainly not on par with that of science. (Barnes 2014,13; Chapman et al. 2014,5;Morey & Piderit 2006, 6; Nord 1995, 296,328,378; Reiss 2023, 164; Rossiter 2022,159-160). This constitutes part of a larger setting where contemporary education is progressively dominated by an approach to knowing that emphasizes the rational, characterized by observation and measurement (Hart 2008, 236-7;Carmody 2011). One might speak of parallel modes of learning—scientific and personal--which rarely meet, resulting in doublethink, holding two apparently contradictory belief systems at once (Noddings 2010,103; Arthur, Gearon & Sears 2010, 24; Walker 2019,105).

With the objective of addressing this dualistic nature of the Catholic school, the study will engage with the writings of the late Catholic philosopher-theologican, Bernard Lonergan, to examine the nature of knowledge operating in the Catholic school. It is generally agreed that he satisfactorily confronted the issue of the duality of knowledge as he approached the study of religion, giving it an academic footing, in his book, *Method In Theology*.

This discussion builds on Lonergan's philosophy of education as it is mined from his writings because he wrote relatively little specifically on education (Lonergan 1993). Much of the content of his direct concern with Catholic education is outlined by Paddy Walsh (2018) and detailed, closer to the time, by James Sanders (1961, 88-108, 133-150). Walsh identified key aspects of what Lonergan considered to be necessary for an updated Catholic philosophy of education, namely, that it be Catholic, concrete, contemporary, existential, historical, and in conversation with modern science (Walsh 2018, 135) while Sanders focused on Lonergan's concern with what Lonergan called new knowledge.

Arthur's model of the Catholic school, though embedded in a specifically British context, is chosen because it describes a transition which appears to have wide heuristic value. Nonetheless, there is awareness that the Catholic school in today's settings has numerous configurations worldwide (Grace & O'Keefe 2007; Mesa 2013, 184;Groome 2021, x, 167, 190; Pring 2018,75; Grace & Wodon, 2022). The purpose of this reflction therefore is in part that a better understanding of the Catholic school's identity can emerge from critical discussion and debate.

What follows has a twofold goal. The first section will indicate how Lonergan's theory of knowledge resolves the dualistic nature of knowledge, enabling learning to be more integrative and the second part will illustrate how this form of learning can operate in the Catholic school.

The Question Contextualized

The split between religious and secular knowledge is rooted historically Gifford (2019). Paul Gifford speaks of the transformation of cognition in the West as he recalls that Medieval Christianity was a world where the supernatural was tangible as religion and the understanding of life was largely based on patristic theology (Gifford 2019, 29). With the development of natural science (roughly from 1572 onwards), this world and the consciousness of its people changed. Reasoning ceased to be based mainly on principles but on observation and measurement. Philosophy and theology were dethroned and this new form of scientific knowledge helped to inaugurate modernity. Concern with the supernatural was replaced with a this-wordly preoccupation (Groome 2021, 38,95; Pring 2021, 9-10; Manning 2018, 26-40).

Through this shift of worldview, in the nineteenth and the early twentieth century, the Catholic church tended to resist modernity and resorted to a form of thinking called neo-scholasticism. Lonergan spoke of this Church viewpoint in the context of what he named classical culture which for centuries had provided normative criteria for evaluating knowledge (Gelpi 1997, 53). This normative view of culture revealed an unchanging Medieval metaphysics.

Thus, the problem of bringing together the different forms of knowledge is not new. Among the attempts to address it by Catholic thinkers was that of Joseph Marechal who linked the philosophy of Immanuel Kant to the older metaphysics, derived from Thomas Aquinas. Lonergan, like Karl Rahner and others, at first found this approach to be promising (Gelpi 1994, 91). Progressively, however, he came to realize that Marechal's hypothesis, though creative, was mistaken (Gelpi 1997, 94). It misinterpreted the old metaphysics and ended with a cognitive theory that was incorrect.

Lonergan's Review of Knowledge

Lonergan however concurred with Marechal's desire to enter dialogue with modern philosophers like Hegel, Kant, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Buber. The challenge was to do so effectively. With that in mind, in the 1950s, he wrote a book, *Insight*, where he argued that objectivity in knowing needs to go beyond abstract metaphysical principles to include the knowing subject; knowledge needed, in his words, to be the fruit of authentic subjectivity (Lonergan 1973, 292).

Insight thus resulted from Lonergan's attempt to bridge the gap between what he later called faculty psychology (neoscholasticism) and intentionality analysis (modern philosophy). Later, this led him to address Catholic theology in *Method in Theology*. Catholic theology had become overly theoretical, abstract, and alien. A voice from the era helps confirm this:

> *Religion is irrelevant. This is the conviction of many today (mid-1960s). To many Catholics the church's message is not the Good News that will make sense of their lives…Rather, their faith, as they understand it, is a burden, a collection of dead doctrine, often couched in difficult, archaic language which curbs and confines them (Lance 1964, 13).*

Within this setting, it may be worthwhile to recall that traditionally the Catholic philosophy of education was rooted in philosophical ideas that were seen to be permanent (Redden & Ryan, 1956; Dupuis & Nordberg 1964).

While Lonergan agreed that this perspective had value, he anecdotally relates why the old framework was outdated. At a meeting of the American Philosophical Association at that time, he was asked by two Catholic priests why he was addressing the issue of contemporary Catholic education. As far as they saw it, Catholic education was fixed, changeless, and based on first principles (Lonergan 1993,22).

For Lonergan, this way of thinking was not mistaken but was unsatisfactory mainly because it had failed to address what he termed 'new learning' the knowledge that modern science generated (Sanders 1961, 93; Noddings 2016, 38). Because of this new form of knowledge, the scholastic approach was out of step and incapable of providing the kind of vision that today's school requires (Lonergan 1993, 20). The scholastic mode of theorizing focused on the application of a metaphysical unchanging theory to a time-framed practice.

In Lonergan's view, today's theory should not be philosophy simpliciter, a discipline complete and sufficient to itself. It needs to connect better with the contemporary setting and be 'a philosophy of…' which entails a more intrinsic relationship between theory whether that is theology or whatever with what is taking place. Similarly, the school needs to prepare students for a swiftly changing reality that philosophy simplicter cannot give (Salai 2011, 572). Lonergan's existential emphasis emerged, on his own admission, from his study of the work of the educational psychologist, Jean Piaget, which was rooted in scientific observation (Lonergan 1974a, 78; Gelpi 1994, 107-108; Liddy 2000, 521-532).

Since Lonergan was primarily concerned with theology, he questioned how pre-Vatican II theology linked with reality. He discovered that the tradition was intelligible but was embedded in an archaic way of speaking that had been largely

superseded by science (Bellah & Tippon 2006,12; Gallagher 2010, 64,70). In a sense, the tradition overemphasized the text, overlooking what the text was meant to do (Elias 2010).This included a view of objectivity that almost excluded the subject, where reason puts a premium on detachment and objectivity, suppressing the context dependence of the first-person experience in favour of a third-person perspective (Dunne & Pendlebury 2003, 195). As a result, the theologian and the scientist were operating with different perceptions of knowledge. It might be said that they followed parallel ways.

Knowledge:The Challenge

One could speak of theology analogously with science but if one were to ally it too closely with the scientific method, one would, as it were, study a person as one would study a rock; knowledge is narrowed (Hart 2018,337;Giddy 2011, 528: Buckley 1998,117; McGrath 2011, 86; Wulff 1991, 32). How then could one verify something as non-sense based as the existence of God? (Lonergan 1974b, 120-121; Gallagher 2008, 437; Moore 2011,217). Lonergan was aware of this danger of uncritically adopting the scientific method. He was faced however with how theology could acquire a more satisfactory academic status. This led him to ask: Is knowing valid only when it is scientific in the sense in which natural science is scientific?

Evidently, scientific propositions constitute an important type of human knowing. Yet, despite science's high profile and imperialistic drive, for Lonergan, it is not the whole of knowledge. How might theological and humanistic knowing then be included not as quasi-mythical but as a form of true knowledge? Aware of the importance of having an empirical basis like that of science but keeping in view that the social sciences are concerned with meaning and value while natural science is not, Lonergan expanded his conception of what constitutes empirical.

He argued that science is based on the data supplied by the senses but what of the data not immediately related to the senses--the data of consciousness? To include both streams of knowledge as the route to integrated knowing, he spoke of knowledge that is different from what is scientific, in the natural science sense, but at the same time does not fly in the face of that rationality (Lonergan 1973, 4; Noddings 2008, 384; Pierce 2007; Townes 1966).

Interiority and Critical Realism

Lonergan's self-confessed slow arrival at appreciation of the extended empirical basis of knowledge came from his study of Edmund Husserl who focused upon the data of consciousness which were constitutive of meaning and value (Lonergan 1973, 219). With this, we are concerned with something beyond theory—interiority (Lonergan 1973, 81-99). The knowledge in question resembles theory and science but it is distinct. When awareness is turned inward, we find the world of subjective experience. It resembles the distinction between "I" and "me" where the me represents the contents of our consciousness and the "I" is that part of us that can watch or witness those contents (Hart 2009, 140).

For Lonergan, interiority resembles what Carl Rogers does in the area of feeling when he encourages his clients to advert to, distinguish, name, identify and recognize those that are latent (Lonergan 1974, 269, 274). Tobin Hart (2008,235)

speaks of it in terms of developing spaciousness within us in order to take in what is before us. For Lonergan it focuses primarily on our cognitive operations (Lonergan 1974a, 70).

Coming to know how we can say that we know means becoming aware of our intentional operations (Lonergan 1973, 75). These intentional operations form a patterned process of experience, understanding, judging, and deciding, which, in Lonergan's view, is familiar to everyone (Lonergan 1973, 7, 9, 11-12). The challenge is both to identify and objectify such latent operations (Lonergan 1974a, 76,79)

When speaking of knowledge, given this pattern, Lonergan identifies a major and pervasive oversight. Knowledge is often seen to be rooted in the senses (Lonergan 1974, 265; McShane 2001, 275). Such misconception fails to penetrate the real. It delivers what Andrew Wright calls comprehensive liberalism where initial observation is not challenged by critical reflection (Wright 2007, 3,9, 177). It could perhaps be described as the need to move on beyond the surface (Hart 2009, 1). In Lonergan's view, such half-knowledge or Hart's exclusive assimilative aspect results from failure to be faithful to the underlying self-transcending dynamic entailed in coming to truly know (Gelpi 1994, 107-117; Mc Guckian 2009, 536-537; Hart 2009, 88-89).

Rooting Knowledge Personally: Intellectual Conversion

Aware of the need for more than subjective knowledge, naïve realism, or comprehensive liberalism as Wright calls it, Lonergan does not ask the reader to accept his theory of knowledge without evidence. Drawing on the hypothesis of the universality of how we come to know, he invites each person to verify what is being said personally. This leads to what he describes as the rock on which knowing rests with a relatively sure though never certain conception of reality (Townes 1966).

For this affirmation of how we come to know, Lonergan bids the reader to say whether or not he/she is a knower. A negative answer to this question is self-contradictory. If I am not a knower, I can only make that judgment by knowing. This is pivotal for Lonergan and for verifying the truth of what we know. Lonergan called this process intellectual conversion where we experience:

> …a radical clarification and, consequently, the elimination of an exceedingly stubborn and misleading myth concerning reality, objectivity, and human knowledge. The myth is that knowing is like looking, that objectivity is seeing what is there to be seen and not seeing what is not there, and that the real is what is out there now to be looked at (Lonergan 1973,328).

Lonergan elaborates in terms of what he calls worlds of immediacy and of meaning (Lonergan 1973, 328).

Knowledge Reconceived

He concludes that the criteria of objectivity are not the criteria of ocular vision; they are the compounded criteria of

experiencing, of understanding, of judging, of believing (Lonergan 1973, 238). The capacity to truly know emerges from self-affirmation of the knower in *Insight* and it is termed intellectual conversion in *Method in Theology.* It provides a route to self-knowledge that is normative for objectivity.

This experience of intellectual conversion emerges from a growth in awareness of knowledge as rooted both in one's senses and one's consciousness. The different kinds of knowledge lead to an internal confrontation or, in Lonergan's words, dialectic within consciousness. Knowledge based on the senses tends to pervade leading to what has been described as a very stubborn myth concerning objectivity. This so-called myth identifies all knowing with sense experience and fails to adequately recognize the distinction between the sense world of immediacy and the much larger world of meaning, resulting primarily from thorough understanding and judgement (Lonergan 1973: 238; Walker 2019, 97-98).

Because of the radical nature of the difference between the two perspectives on knowing and the pervasive tendency to confuse them, Lonergan named the potential resolution of such difference of perspective an intellectual conversion. In doing this, he wished to emphasize that true knowledge entailed a fundamental redirection of one's approach to reality. It does not reject but contextualizes the world of scientific knowledge.

Conversion thus intimates a profound personal change in how one encouners the real world—it entails, in Lonergan's words, a decision to create a new framework. He employed it to indicate a movement away from the dualism and persistent view of seeing knowledge exclusively from an external perspective of 'having a look' to where one appreciates that it is the product of a process of experience understanding and judging.

True Self Knowledge

We have identified the dynamics of objective knowledge but how do we how do we apply them to our own self-knowledge? Within this framework, one can ask what knowing one's own knowing entails? How for instance do I apprehend my own perceiving?

This entails an introspection that avoids the trap of seeing knowledge as solely looking within, which is subjective and needs to be objectified. The process of objectifying one's subjectivity entails experience, understanding, and judging the various elements that constitute true knowledge. It means reduplicating the structure of knowing perhaps a little like what we have noted earlier in terms of "I" and "me". One's primary experience of coming to know—the "me" needs to be evaluated by the "I" thus:

> *(1) **Experiencing** one's experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding, (2)**understanding** the unity and relations of one's experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding, (3) **affirming the reality** of one's experienced and understood experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding and (4) **deciding to operate** in accord with the norms immanent in the spontaneous relatedness of one's **experienced**, **understood**, **affirmed** experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding (Lonergan 1973,14).*

Objectifying one's self knowledge in this reduplicative way and by extension progressively arriving at true self-knowledge rests on personal verification, rooted in the structure of human knowing (Lonergan 1973,10; Walker 2019, 98). Such anchoring on the structure of human knowing, not on first principles or content, becomes the bedrock and provides a foundation that is highly sought after but elusive (Noddings 2016, 77; Wright 2007, 8,12-13, 177).

Differentiation of Consciousness

In his second order approach to knowing, Lonergan proposed that he discovered a key to evaluating the truth or falsity of one's perception of it because it focuses on oneself as a knower which allows him/her to assimilate and to differentiate within his/her consciousness his/her modes of being (Roy 1991, 156). If the dynamic of self-transcendence (basically by asking and anwering whatever questions arise in an area of investigation) is followed consistently, it leads to intellectual conversion. The subject is then enabled to become explicitly aware of his/her intentional operations which provides a base for the differentiation of consciousness.

Such awareness resembles where for instance the biologist acknowledges his/her special methods but at the same time sees the wider horizon where interdisciplinary problems arise. In the measure that special methods acknowledge their common core in transcendental method and that norms common to all sciences can be acknowledged, a secure basis will be attained for addressing interdisciplinary problems (Lonergan 1973, 222-223; Winch 2004, 467-484; Bellah & Tippon 2006, 15; Fowler 2021).

Similarly, this capacity yields a framework where each tradition's exclusive truth claims can be recognized and respected as proper norms in a framework of common norms. It avoids viewing reality through a single discipline or tradition. Whatever unity between disciplines exists, perception of it is located in the person as he/she adopts the transcendental method (Lonergan 1973, 11). As a person identifies his/her inner self, he/she is enabled, as it were, to stand back, break from the linear environment, and call upon his/her assimilative capacity. This allows the person to view special perspectives objectively. As writers contend, this assimilative capacity can be enhanced through liberal education (Liddy 2000, 521-532;Walker 2019,101;Williams 2013).

Conversion: Religious, Moral, and Affective

For Lonergan, intellectual conversion is one of three or four experiences of conversion—the others occur in the area of religion, morality, and affectivity (Lonergan 1973, 238; Gelpi 1997, 63-69; Henchin & Hearlson 2020, 258). Each is a product of interiority, second order, knowing.

Like intellectual conversion, each entails assuming responsible decisions about the various distinctive yet interconnected dimensions of oneself (Lonergan 1973, 238; Gelpi 1997, 56-58). They can occur at different times and in a different sequence. Ideally a person will ultimately be converted on all the areas mentioned while the interrelationship of the conversions is, in Lonergan's terms, sublational by which is means that they enhance each other but retain their autonomy

(Walker 2019,98).

Freedom to Choose

By focusing on intellectual conversion as the foundation of knowledge, Lonergan moved from faculty psychology, neo-scholastic metaphysics, and its associated objectivity which, as indicated, is largely detached and impersonal. Conversion provides an objectivity that includes the person (Lonergan 1973, 338)

Ideally, the self-transcendence developed through conversion leads to when the existential subject finds out for him/herself what one is to make of him/herself in a setting where cultural space is mapped out (Longeran 1988, 223; 1967, 225; *The Catholic School*, para 7,19, 26,31,56; Lonergan 1967, 234; Balin & Siegel 2003, 188). The person is in the realm of freedom from practical desire with capacity to live life as one has reason to value (Sen 1999, 14-15, 36, 292-297). This holistic view is evidently a key element in the education of a person (Miller 2018, 3-15).

Conversion and the School

Educators largely agree that such freedom should constitute the aim of education (Reiss & White 2013, 6,14; Pring 2018, 87,114; McCowan & Unterhalter 2015, 207**).** It is education for self-knowledge as the person becomes open-eyed, and deliberate. Attainment of the capacity to encounter traditions, religious or other, in a way that is critically self-aware combined with the ability to choose one's worldview freely, which the various conversions promise, seems to be a commendable educational objective at any level but especially when leaving secondary-level school. In what follows, w e will examine how Lonergan's theory of knowledge can function in the Catholic institution as articulated through his notions of religious, intellectual, moral, and affective conversions.

Conversion & The School

Conversion, the ideal aim of education, in light of this discussion, should not be confined to the Catholic school. For any school, conversion is a commendable aim where the student becomes both competent academically but is also empowered to decide freely, intelligently, and rationally what he/she is to make of him/herself.

The Catholic School

The Catholic school, like others, needs to articulate and communicate a vision that includes elements of Lonergan's religious conversion (Nord 1995, 244). It should however be both Christian and Catholic. The Catholic lens on Jesus would include a distinctively Catholic reading of scripture and a development of the church's doctrines through the ages**,** among which the major ones are the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Original sin, the sacraments, grace, devotion to Mary the mother of God and the saints, (*The Catholic School*, para 7,12-13,19, 26,29,31,56; Groome 2014, 115-118; 122: Groome 2021,

137-141, 218). It wou8ld be Christ centred and serves the Catholic Church's evangelistic mission and aims to provide a holistic education (Congregation for Catholic Education para 1923,95). Other features considered to be significant are that there is freedom to choose in accordance with conscience. the development of a critical capacity, enhancement of personal responsibility, commitment to service of others, community, the common good, and justice (*The Catholic School*, para 7,19, 26,31,56; Miller 2006).

A Pluralistic Vision

In today's context of pluralism, the Catholic schools' presentation of the Catholic tradition ought not be simply dogmatic. Rather, it needs to be catholic, ecumenical and inter-faith (Carmody 2017, 164-168; Gelpi 1997, 67; Bradley 2016, 68; Groome 2006,770). It is said that after Vatican II, the charter for Catholic schools in the U.S. and possibly more widely shifted from protecting the faithful from a hostile Protestant majority to pursuing peace and social justice within an ecumenical and multicultural world (Bryk, Lee, Holland 1993, 301). This pluralistic dimension of the Catholic school calls for dialogue (Congregation for Catholic Education, 30,87; *The Catholic School*, 15,57,67; Groome 1998, 350). The question becomes:how does the Catholic tradition relate to other Christian, faith and non-faith traditions?

This is crucial if the school is to address the person in his/her totality particularly if she/he does not belong to the Catholic Church (Chambers 2012, 186-199; Williams 2010,33). Drawing on Lonergan, he locates religious experience in the person's drive to self-transcendence and sense of mystery (Lonergan 1973, 101-103, 119). Religious experience is seen by him to be intrinsic to our humanity and so it provides a basis for interreligious and intercultural dialogue (Loneergan 1973, 108-109; Carmody 2017,164-165).

How religious experience is particularized by denominations and other religious groups varies so that any true religious dialogue needs to see a person's religious expression in the light of his/her particular background (Bellah 2011, 12; Carmody 2023).

Indoctrination

In the Catholic school, religious education both formal and informal, needs to avoid colonization (*The Catholic School* para 17-23; Pring 2018, 14-142; Smart 1968, 96; Copley 2008; Whittle 2022). This can be done by approaching religious expression from the standpoint of intellectual conversion.

It is probably true that, though the ideal of free choice in matters of religious affiliation has always been proclaimed by the Catholic Church, students often did not have the tools required for this to happen. Options were limited and frequently poorly presented, even underwritten by misleading theology as, for instance, we find in Whittle's use of the theology of Karl Rahner (Whitle 2015;Carmody 2017). Indoctrination depends upon a number of criteria, such as to do with the degree to which a teacher fails to mention alternative beliefs, the tone of voice used, the lack of sympathy for the criticisms levelled (Smart 1968, 98).

What we have outlined in regard to intellectual conversion demands that alternatives should be rigorously examined for their truth value, entailing what Lonergan called dialectic (Lonergan 1973, 235-266). It may be argued that the Catholic school, like other faith schools, has a privileged position in so far as what happens within it is underpinned by a specifically Catholic confessional narrative (*The Catholic School* para 16; Congregation for Catholic Education, 69; Pring 2018, 82; Manning 2018, 41-42). Though this is true, all narratives should be subjected to critical assessment ensuring that any habitus-like subconscious bias would be identified and critically addressed, seeking their truth value (Copley 2008, 29).

The Catholic Story, as presented within the Catholic institution, should be seen to be one option, though privileged, among a range, drawing on the Catholic tradition 's sense of ecumenical and interfaith dialogue. (*The Catholic School* para 15,57,67; Pring 2018, 45-46; Stor Freire, 1987:11-31). This could entail tension between confessional faith formation and the academic study of religion (Carmody & Carmody 1983, 6). For the non-Catholic, the Catholic tradition should be acceptable academically but may seem confessionally undesirable meriting his/her exemption from formal presentations in class or out of it (Donlevy 2007, 293-320: Groome 2014, 190). While opting out has been seen to be acceptable in various situations as students and staff are free to absent themselves, can one then wonder about the significance of the Catholic school's evangelistic role?

Surely, the non-Catholics ought to feel at home in the Catholic school but they also need to recognize that they are in a Catholic school. The inclusion of non-Catholics might be accepted if all denominations and faiths are non-confessional (Whittle 2016). More akin to the institution's confessional agenda might be that it could be seen to have witness value in terms of having students and staff exposed to Catholic teachers and programs in a designedly Catholic atmosphere (Congregation for Catholic Education, 28, 45; *The Catholic School* para 43,78,91; Curran 1997:106-107).

'Learning from' Catholicism

However, the Catholic institution need not and probably ought not to remain at a non-confessional level as propounded by Kirwan & Whittle (2021). Instead, in keeping with the school's specifically Catholic evangelistic purpose, it could mean encountering the Catholic tradition and 'learning from' it (Grimmitt 1987, 225-226). This could resemble how one might 'learn from' experiencing a Shakespearean play or poem. It might mean seeing the tradition briefly from the inside, becoming as it were a Catholic for an hour (Williams 2013, 253: Williams 2006, 1033; Reiss 2023, 160).

With this approach, the student may not need to study many different religions but ought to gain a sense of the basic structure of religion or the big questions enabling him/her to appreciate a variety of ways of making sense of the world (Apple 2001, 23; Palmer 1998/1999; Reiss 2023, 161). The Catholic school could then nurture children in values of their own faith yet at the same time encourage respect and dialogue with other faiths and non-religious worldviews. This would provide a more adequate religious literacy for all (Feinberg 2013, 433). It would mean that the Catholic school does not demand adherence to its faith tradition but can open the way to mature acceptance or rejection of it (Congregation for Catholic Education, 28).

To move from 'learning about' to 'learning from,' so that learning might transcend the informative, students need to move

beyond the appearances of things and use the eyes of their souls to perceive their real meaning (Dupuis & Gordon 2010, 43). Such 'learning from' needs to address the traditions deeply which should allow the person to view them from the inside without getting trapped within. It would appear that correct understanding should precede judgement on what is being understood (Smart 1968 103).

Discernment

By subjecting various religious and non-religious viewpoints to critical scrutiny, we are concerned with more than Kantian rationality. Reason of the heart is also needed (Bellah & Tippon 2006, 8-13; McGrath 2011, 59, 71,86; Noddings 2016, 173-188; Gearon 2014, 5). This calls forth the need for affective conversion and an accompanying liberating offline assimilative capacity (Lonergan 1973, 30-41; Gelpi 1997, 60-62; Doran 1977; Connor 2006,128-129; Sanders 1961, 140-144). Harmonizing different strands of reason responsibly and intelligently brings us to the realm of holism and discernment (Gallagher 2010,15-16; Nouwen 2013; Sheldrake 2011).

Social Justice

As part of this affective conversion, the Catholic school today ought to speak of justice at different levels—personal and social (*The Catholic School* para 24,58;McKinney 2023). For this, the person will be challenged to review his/her social position in terms of such things as the common good. It will need to focus on how the individual responds to value and how community assumes different meanings especially as it includes impersonal structures (Lonergan 1973, 27-55; Groome 2014, 115-117; Gelpi 1997, 64-66; Beirne 1985; Burbules & Torres 2000, 7; Sanders 1961, 100).

Catholic moral conversion that includes a call to social justice needs to be located not in some 'doing good' ideology as we find in Kirwan & Whittle (2021). It should rather be underpinned by the Catholic Story (Gerics 1991, 250-264). The Catholic school's own sense of community and justice also need to be critically evaluated in light of the Catholic ideal (Congregation for Catholic Education, 16; Williams 2010, 29; Bryk 1993, 275, 289-290).

Pedagogical Implications

If the central focus of Lonergan's notion of conversion in education is accepted, how does one educate towards conversion at different levels—affective, intellectual, moral, and religious? In a sense, one cannot. In line with people like John Dewey, Paulo Freire and Carl Rogers, the discovery entailed in conversion as Lonergan emphasized is personal. It forms a tradition where objectivity is not primarily external and so contrasts with much contemporary, large-scale league-table quantitative somewhat soulless, education (Miller 2009, 581-588).

In this respect, the pupil does not learn from the teacher. Rather the teacher stimulates the student to bring to life the truth that already exists in the mind (Dupuis & Gordon 2010, 66; Davis & Williams 2003, 267-268). The approach thus strives to be sensitive to where students are and what they want but it avoids being overly subjective (Bonnett & Cuypers 2003: 326-

340; Trigg 2023, 118-135). Interaction with tradition strives to be objective along the lines of Grimmitt's 'learning from' underpinned by intellectual conversion (Carmody 2021:7-8).

One might object that having the learner move towards intellectual conversion is unrealistic, particularly for students at the junior or even senior levels. It is more appropriate for higher-level students (Perry 1970; Fowler 1981; Loder & Fowler 1982). This seems to be true. However, undergoing conversion is not an all-or-nothing task in what could be seen as a pilgrimage towards one's true self (Palmer 2010,36). As Patrick Giddy points out, knowing what knowing is remains a matter of fuller appropriation of a capacity we already have but do not exercise to the full extent (Giddy, 2011:531).

While Giddy views the starting point to be easily accessible, gaining the horizon of intellectual conversion is, as we have intimated, a long-term achievement (Sanders 1961, 103-108). In line with Giddy, the starting point may not be in the area of intellect but in moral, affective, or religious domains. Though we have argued that intellectual conversion is central to studying religion objectively, it is not necessarily prior to the other conversions so that for instance moral, affective, or religious conversion may precede it.

Role of the Teacher

The learner can become engaged in diverse ways which call upon what Noddings speaks about as the teacher's renaissance dimension where he/she can fruitfully draw from diverse resources helping to close the gap between the Catholic tradition of learning and the classroom (Noddings 1998, 86-89; McKinney & Sullivan 2013). At the same time, the teacher him/herself needs to develop the assimilative capacity which intellectual conversion and other conversions offer.

Otherwise, he/she will be ill-equipped to discuss various religious and other viewpoints impartially where for instance a Muslim could objectively teach Catholicism or visa-versa. The teacher needs to present the subject matter in a way that those who hold the viewpoint would recognize themselves in what is delivered (Copley 2008,29). The teacher thus needs the capacity to engender dialogue so as to be enabled and to enable viewing religious traditions from the standpoint of the other (Buber 1947,97; Puolimatka 2005, 192; McLaren 1988, 213-234).

Intellectual Conversion in the Curriculum

While the self-reflective approach outlined here could feature as an add-on course in school perhaps as philosophy or methodology. Given the increasingly overloaded curricula, however, it may be more feasible to stretch the subjects from within, combing self-reflectivity with academic delivery and moving what is largely informational to what is transformative (Hart 2009; Noddings 2013, 62; Morey & Piderit 2006, 314; Pring 2018, 86; Reiss 2023, 164).

Conclusion

We have centred on how the dualistic learning of the Catholic school today can be addressed. Lonergan's theory of

knowledge for this long-standing issue in the Catholic tradition has been invoked. From his perspective in the late 1950s, the Catholic church needed to develop a better relationship with modern science. He perceived that scientific and humanistic knowledge are distinct but are often confused, leading mainly to scientific reduction of humanistic learning and visa versa.

Educationally, it is thus crucial that the student become aware of these two distinct sources of knowledge so that he/she develops the capacity to be both proficient academically and be prepared to live his/her life responsibly. As students move from Physics to Religious Education in school or more widely from professional scientific studies to religion, they need to develop the means to appreciate that scientific knowledge is valid but it needs to be complemented with self-knowledge (Giroux 2011, 153; Noddings 2006, 250). Otherwise, we risk what happened under Nazi occupation where superb musicians like Hans Frank entertained guests to performances of Bach and Mozart in the evening and savagely murdered defenceless prisoners in the morning. We need learned but responsible engineers and physicians who will not build gas chambers and poison children (Pring 2019, 47; Gallagher 2003, 58-59).

Through Lonergan's theory of knowledge, it has been argued that this clash of perspectives on knowledge can be satisfactorily addressed by a consideration of different forms of objectivity through what he terms intellectual conversion so that the school, Catholic and other, is enabled to provide an integrative worldview on what is learned.

Since our main concern has been the Catholic school, Lonergan's approach to knowledge within it has been outlined emphasizing that, employing Lonergan's framework, it has potential to educate the whole person who appreciates the benefits of science but who at the same time is enabled to properly evaluate them.

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