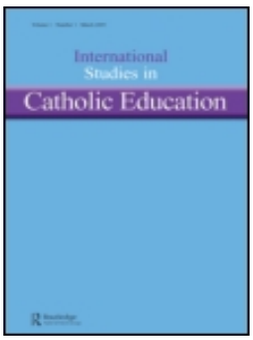

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Towards a contemporary Catholic philosophy of education

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Since Vatican II, there have been calls for a new approach to the Catholic philosophy of education so as to address the ongoing contemporary challenges in the area. This article will develop a framework for such in terms of Bernard Lonergan's notion of self-transcendence. By approaching it in this way a holistic view of the person is preserved, opening the way to forming the basis of a religiously and culturally pluralistic community as part of the specific mission of the Catholic Church.

Keywords: Catholic education; self-transcendence philosophy; Lonergan modernisation

Context: Vatican II transformations

Education continues to constitute an important part of the Catholic Church's ministry. In 1999, it was estimated that at the primary and secondary levels alone, the Catholic Church served more than 50 million students (Pittau 2000, 139). Through the centuries its nature has changed. Until the close of Vatican II in the 1960s, much of what took place at Catholic educational settings operated largely within the context of Scholastic philosophy[1] (Elias 1999, 92–4; 2006, 9–10; Carr et al. 1995, 163). At this time too the Catholic school was reserved almost entirely for Catholic children.

Vatican II, however, challenged the Church to respond more satisfactorily to the demands of the modern world (Gleeson 1995; Gilkey 1975). Although, after Vatican II, membership of the Catholic Church was still seen to be necessary for salvation, those outside could be saved through the dictates of their consciences and non-Catholic religious traditions were, moreover, seen to be salvific (Race and Hedges 2008, 69–97). The Catholic viewpoint on education also changed, but continued to emphasise the integral formation of the person, Christ as foundational, and the school as a locus, especially for the promotion of justice.

Post-Vatican II discourse thus reflects a major shift in the Catholic approach to the modern world. The Canadian philosopher–theologian Bernard Lonergan spoke of it as a 'crisis of culture'. What he termed classical culture had operated in the pre-Vatican II church but had been superseded (Lonergan 1972, xi; 1967, 266). For him, classical culture had been normative and so regarded its efforts to control meaning to be exclusively valid. From this perspective, the educational system that had developed within it became normative for a proper education, whether one was being educated in London or Nairobi (Dupuis and Gordon 2010, 9–11). With the onset of viewing culture empirically, the criteria for educational normativity were no longer taken from the classical ideal and so the classical curriculum was no longer seen to be normative

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for all places and times. The human could no longer be derived, as it were, exclusively from a particular culture (Gelpi 1997, 52; Noddings 2007, 13–22).

A new setting for Catholic schooling

Today, the Catholic school is in many instances what Arthur termed dualistic and pluralistic rather than holistic (Arthur 1995, 227–8). As holistic, Catholic teachers and staff predominate and provide a specifically Catholic ethos. This model now forms only part of the Catholic educational enterprise in most parts of the world. Rather, what has emerged is the Catholic school as dualistic. As such, it remains a single institution which conducts two separate activities within itself: secular and sacred. In addition, there are ever increasing pluralistic settings where teachers and students of other denominations and faith form an ever larger segment of the school population. As a result of this change in the nature of Catholic schooling at all levels, Arthur (1995, 245–6) contends that there is no agreement on the necessary means to achieving the objectives of Catholic education. Yet, he and others note that there is a conspicuous lack of reflection on the goals that underpin the Catholic school system (Grace 2002, 12; 2009, 915–16). One might say that here we have an aspect of what Lonergan spoke of as a 'crisis of culture'.

Purpose of this article

Given the changed reality, a review of the philosophy of Catholic education seems timely. This article aims to provide such by outlining Lonergan's educational philosophy in terms of self-transcendence because of his recognised stature as a Roman Catholic philosopher. Although Lonergan primarily focused upon Catholic theological education, the more general application of his approach offers an appropriate framework for Catholic philosophy of education today.

A new approach to a Catholic philosophy of education

To update the Catholic philosophy of education, what is needed? Perhaps, a major review is unnecessary. Such a perspective may be illustrated by an incident related by Lonergan when he attended a meeting of the American Philosophical Association and was asked by two priests that he met what he was doing at such a meeting since, in their view, you cannot change first principles (Lonergan 1993, 22). Whether such appeal to first principles is still adequate raises the question of the relationship between philosophy and education.

As philosophy and education were traditionally seen within the Catholic Church, philosophy was distinct. The philosophy of education was seen to be an application of the fundamental principles of the philosophy of life to the work of education (Redden and Ryan 1956, viii, 10). Within this perspective, it might be reasonably asked, as the priests did, why the post-Vatican II situation should require more than a revised version of such application?

A Catholic philosophy of education could still be developed in this way on the basis of the predominantly scholastic philosophic syntheses that featured before Vatican II. However, its adequacy would be problematic because an educational philosophy that appeals to truths that hold in any age is defending a negative position (Lonergan 1993, 9). In a word, the Aristotelian perspective of neo-scholasticism can

neither absorb nor structure modern historical science or research (McCool 1993, 327). If, however, the Catholic philosophy of education is to provide a vision for the future, it needs more than immutable truths. It needs to be more than philosophy *simpliciter*. It must to be closer to practice. For Lonergan, there are at least two ways of having a theoretical discipline connected with particulars:

> Insofar as one attends merely to concepts one can think of universals being applied to particulars: the universals would be the philosophy, and the particulars to which they are applied. But you have to think of understanding, insight, the ground of conception. This understanding arises from sensible data. If we think in this way, we will see quite a different relation between intelligence and sensible data. Intelligence, understanding as insight, as the ground of conception, has quite a different relationship with the particular and the concrete from the relationship found in the abstract concepts 'the universal' and 'the particular'. There are, then, at least two ways of having a theoretical discipline connected with particulars: one through insight into phantasm, the other through the subsumption of particulars under universals. (Lonergan 1993, 20)

Lonergan thus argues that the older approach of Catholic education, where theory as subsumption of particulars under universals operated, is unsatisfactory largely because of its distance from new learning (Sanders 1961, 93; Dumenuco 1978, 25; Buckley 1998, 167–8; Sullivan 2001, 9, 40; Dupuis and Nordberg 1964, 95). It was philosophy *simpliciter* and existed as a discipline complete and sufficient unto itself. It was not and could not be a philosophy of anything. A new more dynamic approach is required if education is to prepare the developing individual for a changing, not a timeless, world (Lonergan 1993, 19).

Empirically based philosophy

Such an approach should focus on the developing person and his or her levels of consciousness. Historicity then dethrones speculative intellect in favour of an empirically based philosophy (Lonergan 1974d, 236; Moore 2007; McCool 1993, 324–35). For Lonergan, the existential subject is constituted by data of both sense and consciousness. His major work, *Insight* (1957), is where generalised empirical method stands to data of consciousness as empirical method stands to data of sense (McShane 1980, 19).[2] This sense of the empirical appears initially to have been influenced by his study of Jean Piaget and on occasion it has been seen to be Kantian. However, from Lonergan's perspective, Kant ended with meaning but lacked reality (Lonergan 1974f, 78).

Lonergan's notion of experience as empirical entailed a shift from faculty psychology to intentionality analysis. Thus, simply reading *Insight* would be futile if the reader did not continually verify the ideas and concepts in his or her own experience and reflection (Gallagher 2010, 66).[3] This reading is highly personal, entailing a profound shift from concern with abstract metaphysics and timeless principles to psychology. Lonergan illustrated this himself. When he discussed God's existence and nature in *Insight*, he later recalled how he had then considered proof more important than experience. This he came to see to have been mistaken because God comes to us not through argument but primarily though his gift of love reflecting Newman's sentiment that the best evidence for God lies within us (Lonergan 1974a, 277; Gallagher 2010, 7, 64; Noddings 2006, 253).

A consequence of this 'turn to the subject' is that academic questions are no longer abstract and reified. Rather, they become the kinds of questions that lie at the heart of religion (Wright 2004, 173). This 'turn to the subject' forms the basis of the new approach to the Catholic philosophy of education where one becomes aware of oneself operating (Lonergan 1972, 9).

Self-transcendence

Lonergan eventually called such self-awareness 'conversion'. The reason for this has long been questioned (Dorr 1975, 175–216; McGuckian 2009, 536–7). He did this to convey a sense of profound change (Gregson 1988, 16–35; Conn 1976, 362–404). It assumes both a secular and religious usage and, according to Gelpi (1997, 56–7), should be seen to carry a note of responsibility. The term 'conversion' occurs mainly after the publication of *Insight* and assumes a major role in *Method in theology* (1972).

In this new context of speaking in terms of conversion, *Insight* was seen as an invitation to 'intellectual conversion' (Liddy 1993, 202). As noted, a proper reading of it is highly personal where one becomes familiar with the activities of one's own intelligence (Lonergan 1957, xix). It can entail moving roots, fundamentally changing worldviews, touching the person at his or her deepest (Lonergan 1972, 241; Barden and McShane 1969, 48–54; Buckley 1998, 126; Noddings 2007, 233).

Intellectual conversion is not, however, exclusively subjectivist. Lonergan's treatment is unambivalently realist. When we say that something is, we mean its reality does not depend on our cognitional activity. It is, as Wright (2007, 8) puts it, in another context, where judgemental rationality enables us to lay claim to relatively secure knowledge of reality. If a person identifies in him or herself the pattern of cognitional operations needed to make any affirmation, he or she reaches a position that, for Lonergan, cannot be revised without engaging in contradiction (Lonergan 1957, chap. 11; Gelpi 1994, 111–17). This is the rock on which knowledge builds.[4]

In *Method in theology*, Lonergan spoke not only of intellectual but also of moral and religious conversion. Conversion is a mode of self-transcendence, a way of moving beyond oneself. It happens first when we develop intellectually as children from a very limited world of the cradle eventually to a much wider world of adult life. This capacity to open up to the world has been spoken about as restlessness of the heart and as the wonder of Aristotle (Buckley 1998, 160; Lonergan 1957, 9; 2004, 319–20). In so far as we allow this inner drive – eros of mind – to unfold, we attain levels of self-transcendence. Empowering this fundamental human dis-ease to gain momentum could be seen as key to education (Noddings 2006, 290; Buckley 1998, 160). It constitutes part of our challenge as children to distinguish ourselves from the immediate world about us and eventually propels us to where we stand on our own feet (Lonergan 2004, 321–2; 1988a, 225–6; Kegan 1982, 111–54; Perry 1984, 90; Gelpi 1997, 59–60; Walsh 1993, 3).

Such self-affirmation is not automatic, for it entails distinguishing truth from myth, which may be progressively more difficult where, as Heidegger (1962, 149 ff., 210, 225) put it, the 'They' world is prevalent. We are frequently encouraged to live with half-truths (Lonergan 1974c, 170; Teevan 2004, 310). If we reach intellectual self-transcendence through intellectual conversion, which is high achievement, we will be prodded to further discontent as we see millions starving and homeless while we are satisfied. We will be challenged to move beyond the kind of splintered lives

where educated people can participate in torture, abuse and even extermination of innocent people (Noddings 1993, 165; Lonergan 2004, 322–3). Such reality, in turn, causes us to wonder about the intelligibility of the order of which we are part, confronting us with a sense of mystery (Barden and McShane 1969, 124–5; Duminuco 1978, 23; Lonergan 2004, 327; 1972, 19–20, 117–18; Hughes 2007).

The basic human urge to go beyond ourselves is evidenced at different levels of education. In many instances, we arrive at functional literacy where we settle for the 'They' world. This is compatible with high levels of competency and professionalism, as is evident today where individuals experience themselves to be fragmented, ever more part of a 'togetherness' as the firey jaws of collectivism devour all self-hood (Buber 1965, 111). Education needs to produce more than professional competence. In Lonergan's terms, intellectual development, education from 'below upwards', however important and necessary, is incomplete (Lonergan 1988b, 108–13; Benedict 2010a; Roy 1991, 155–63). More is needed. Individuals need to be grounded more firmly than on the rock of Sisyphus (as described in Camus' *Myth of Sisyphus*), where we see in wonder and terror Sisyphus' wry smile bespeaking his awareness that we must resume all over again the quest for truth, a labour that is going nowhere (Perry 1984, 90).

Focus on self-transcendence as an ideal underpins the kind of education identified by Lonergan as from 'below upwards' in so far as it emphasises intellectual development. However, it strives to promote conversion – intellectual, moral and religious. It thus opens the way to a vision and hope based on education from 'the above downwards' (Lonergan 1988b, 108–13; Gallagher 2010 69). Education from both 'below upwards' and 'above downwards' are required if education is not to settle for creating 'ladies and gentlemen' without morals, on the one hand, and religious fundamentalists where supernatural causes are imposed on science, on the other (Noddings 2006, 254; Gelpi 1997, 71; Sullivan 2001, 157–75, 188–94; Grace 2009, 916; Walsh 2007, 31–5).

We have now identified some of the contours of Lonergan's educational philosophy in terms of self-transcendence as an ideal towards which a new Catholic philosophy of education might aim. As such, it would not be content with provision of intellectual or artistic excellence alone. It is, in addition, concerned with personal integration to ensure that the person becomes not only highly competent but responsible intellectually, morally and religiously. In what follows, we will examine the implications of this for some key concepts in the traditional approach to Catholic education, namely person, Catholic mission and community.

Catholic education: the person

In addressing contemporary education, it is said that public schools in liberal democracies pay little attention to personal life (Noddings 1993, 29; 2005, 20). As Bryk put it:

> It is possible for a student who performs adequately and does not draw attention to himself to pass through high school without experiencing a meaningful individual engagement with the adults present there. (1988, 278)

In the wider context, concern with specialisation and performance-based criteria view learning mechanically (Combs 1977, 18–19). As Grace (2002, 34), however,

reminds us, schools are not scientific laboratories. In such settings, much school learning may even be inconsequential, having little influence on behaviour. It often becomes what Rogers (1977, 24) spoke of as 'education from the neck up', where 'cultivated' gentlemen can be unscrupulous murderers (Buckley 1998, 117).

Where, however, education becomes limited to a mode of development that is largely grounded in paradigms emanating from natural science, we are confronted with specialisation that generates large-scale alienation. We face a reality of 'comprehensive liberalism' (Wright 2007, 28 ff.) where freedom and tolerance become cardinal virtues and the conjugation of secularisation and materialist values deny the value of the sacred. Subjects become scientific in the measure that they conform to the procedures of natural science (Lonergan 1972, 3; Dewey 1933, v; Noddings 1988, 216). In such situations, the student can be faced with an overpowering task if he or she is not to allow him or herself to become a quasi-object, part of the lonely crowd with no windows on the wonders of life (King 2009, 19).[5]

Lonergan's self-transcendence based approach recognises the significance of science. His concern centres on the tendency to regard science as carrying magical solutions to what lies beyond it, when the specialist acts as if other specialists did not exist when a Hawkins, Dawkins or Dennett the scientist moves beyond science (Corwin 1974, 178). Self-transcendence provides a base where specialties are viewed to be functionally related, where consciousness is differentiated and where transcendental method underpins the methods of particular sciences (Mooney 1992, 54). Educationally, it means a movement beyond specific methods and a turn to self-knowledge, one's ability to stand back and to draw from one's developed assimilative power[6] (Lonergan 1993, 205–6; Noddings 2006, 289; Walsh 1993, 125).

At stake here is the relationship between learning and personal experience. Cold explanation does not give us a home. As learning becomes detached from human concern we are faced not only with impersonal classrooms but on the larger scale with the grim possibility of a nuclear holocaust. We face a vast machine which, as it were, nobody seems to be running. 'Experts' talk confidently, carrying large segments of the population blindly, as when economics breaks loose from social ethics (Lonergan 1993, 44: O'Hanlon 2009, 30).

As specialisation continues without concern for the larger picture, our understanding of the world is reduced often to the insights of a single discipline (Wright 2007, 20). It then becomes a major challenge to avoid reducing education to preparation for employment. In Catholic settings it has, for instance, been asserted that we find students' personal concerns excluded from academic programmes. Transformative questions that arise tend to be ignored (Doran n.d.; Buckley 1998, 40–51, 116; Sullivan 2001, 150–1). Education neglects to point beyond the surface towards the centre, where integration is possible. Graduates become organs of society deeply in need of the wisdom (Walmsley 2008, 256; Liddy 2000, 521–32; Maritain 1943, 113). Such education has lost its unique and demanding teleology so that students emerge virtually unscathed by what has gone on in the classrooms.

Where self-transcendence operates, however, one is urged to move beyond science and theory to human consciousness and there begin to connect with one's depths (Grace 2002, 46). The desired outcome is a differentiation of consciousness that enables the person to be aware of his or herself as intellectual, moral or religious and as operating in different realms of meaning. He or she, however, remains an ontic unity, not merely a collection of parts (Teevan 2004, 312–13; Byrnes 2002, 43). Then, the understanding that science and tradition provide can be retained but transcended

as the person judges its relevance and decides what he or she is to make of it for him or herself.

In today's world where personal integration is undervalued, such self-direction often generates much anxiety (Dupuis and Gordon 2010, 256). Assuming a personal stance that is fundamental to one's selfhood requires an education that is both informative and transformative. Decisions remain free but they need to be made not where, in a sense, the self is all (Gallagher 1997, 69) but where that self recognises the larger context, that is, where the self is not fragmented but connected. Education towards self-transcendence struggles to develop capacity to negotiate self-fulfilment with conscience (Gallagher 2010, 116; Gelpi 1994, 116–17; Bonnett and Cuypers 2003, 326–40; Riordan 2008, 153; Wright 2007, 38; Conn 1998, 324).

Catholic education: the mission

Ideally, this approach to the self should lead the person to the need for education 'from above downwards':

> Man's transcendental subjectivity is multilated or abolished, unless he is stretching forth towards the intelligible, the unconditioned, the good of value. The reach, not of his attainment, but of his intending is unrestricted. There lies within his horizon a region for the divine, a shrine for ultimate holiness. It cannot be ignored. The atheist may pronounce it empty. The agnostic may urge that he finds his investigation has been inconclusive. The contemporary humanist will refuse to allow the question to arise. But their negations ignore our native orientation to the divine. (Lonergan 1972, 103)

Because a religious dimension is intrinsic to self-transcendence and the holistic education it underwrites, it ought to be included in national education curricula. Yet, in much of today's world, this has become a major challenge, especially where the spiritual aspect of the self receives almost no attention in today's public schools (Noddings 2005, 49). Even in a country where religion has always been part of true education, White (2004, 162) argues that religion especially as a separate subject should no longer be part of a public school curriculum. Thus, Catholic education faces a major challenge worldwide to keep the culture of the sacred not only alive but distinctive and publicly located (Grace 2009, 908; Grace and O'Keefe 2007, 121–31, 150, 233, 253, 281, 330, 488, 520, 763–73).

Given this major challenge, the specific place of the Catholic tradition needs to be identified (Lonergan 1993, 18; Kelly 1975, 437–70; Carmody 1977, 53–64). For Lonergan, all education ought to include religion, but Catholic education is distinctive. It is, moreover, increasingly set to operate in dualistic and pluralistic environments comprised of students and staff of different faiths, ideologies and backgrounds.

Lonergan viewed religious conversion as the *apex animae* and so educationally foundational (Lonergan 1972, 107). He envisaged the relationship between the Catholic dimension and other forms of religion and ideology ecumenically in line with Vatican II and possibly influenced by the notion of 'anonymous Christians' (Ormerod 2000, 181). This opened the way to view the Catholic setting inclusively, no longer being exclusively denominational, apologetic and catechetical in outreach, but existential, recognising the validity of more than Catholic religious experience. For Lonergan, religious experience was transcultural and thus provided the basis for interreligious dialogue. However, religious experience, for him, was not purely

subjective. Differences between Catholics and other modes of religion remain and are not secondary; they are real (Barnes 2010, 709–27; Carmody, 2010, 44; 1982, 59–64).

In Catholic settings where the population is no longer preponderantly Catholic even nominally, Arthur's holistic model is found wanting, especially in the light of Vatican II's emphasis on ecumenism and interfaith co-operation. A dualistic model retains much of the classical framework of culture and does not move beyond doctrines, whether these be religious or secular. Catholicism still remains normative, even if perhaps less apologetic than earlier, but fails to engage empirically. In such settings, religious education (Catholic or other) would most probably share in what Taylor called an excarnation of reason[7] (Gallagher 2010, 113; Buckley 1998). It would very much resemble the kind of theory that was based on subsumption of the particular traditions under a form of universalist religion (Barnes 2010).

More is needed if it is to incarnate reason and if Catholic schools are to be distinctive, where faith, reason and life are brought into an integrated relationship as a holistic education experience (Grace 2009, 913; Sullivan 2001, 138). For such integration the mode of evangelisation needs to shift from a classicist framework and acknowledge empirically the integrity not only of the evangeliser but of those to whom the message is addressed (Lonergan 1972, 357). This appears crucial if we are concerned with real as opposed to notional assent on the part of those receiving the message (Duminuco 1978, 29–30; Gallagher 2010, 7–23; Williams 2010, 19–36; Buckley 1998, 145). Where the Church's mission is rooted in self-transcendence, it needs to acknowledge true as opposed to false selves in its outreach, some of the implications of which for religious education have been outlined by Wright and others (Wright 2007; Carmody 2010).[8]

Catholic education: the community

In striving to be pluralistic, Catholic education today often confronts the assumption that all single-faith schools offer an education that is narrow and divisive. If this is true, single-faith schools are highly questionable, for we live in a world where in an unprecedented way people of different worldviews live side by side (Juergensmeyer 2006, 4). If, however, as appears to be generally the case, Catholic educational settings set out to be open to other denominations and faiths, there is need for a pluralistic model that more accurately reflects this.

In discussing self-transcendence, we spoke of 'a turn to the subject'. Critics of Lonergan contend that this approach needed to include what they termed 'turn to the other,' even of sociopolitical conversion (Gelpi 1997, 56–7; Rambo 1993, 147). The 'turn to the subject' is seen to be too personalised; a turn to the other as Dewey's logic and liberation theology insist is needed (Gelpi 1994, 117). Lonergan's personalised treatment of the social dimension of life needs to be placed in the context where, only after Vatican II, the social dimension of Catholic life received major attention, especially with its emphasis on justice. Lonergan himself spoke of the earlier time as the age of innocence. In that sense, it could be said that the social problem was new (Miranda 1974, 31; Bryk, Lee, and Holland 1993, 48–50; Ela 1981, 313–39; Benedict 2007, 27; Bell 2008).

If Catholic education is to be self-transcendence focused, it needs a new awareness of the social dimension. It needs to be concerned with developing the individual's capacity to reach the level of our time. Much has taken place since Vatican II' s new emphasis on justice at least 40 years ago (Grace 2009, 914–16;

Beirne 1985). However, we continue to live where there is more wealth on earth but ever more injustice: 2500 million people survive on less than two euros a day and every day 25,000 people die of hunger (Sobrino 2008, 22; Buckley 1998, 105–9; Holman 2002, 68; Benedict 2010b, 30; Mulligan 2007, 65–85).

Lonergan's treatment of the social dimension almost surely needs further articulation in endeavoring to bring people to the level of our time, yet his ideal of self-transcendence is not ahistorical or asocial, it entails dialogue. Religiously, as we noted, the integrity of both the messenger and the recipient are duly acknowledged. Both assume a definite stance, which ought to be based on conversion, not dogma or timeless principles (Gelpi 1994, 115–16). Otherwise, it risks being notional and viewing 'we' as the plural of 'I' (Noddings 1996, 257). Reason needs to be guided by more than logic (Lonergan 1993, 180; Noddings 1996, 249).

For Lonergan, community is primordeal. It coheres or divides where the common field of experience, understanding, judgement and commitments begin and end (Lonergan 1967, 226). To ensure proper inclusion, the person needs to be able to affirm him or herself as being both like and different from the other. Such authentic affirmation is recognised by Lonergan as being no easy achievement personally or socially. It entails intellectual, moral, religious as well as, if the critics are right, social, even psychic conversions (Doran 2006; Gelpi 1997, 71).

Lonergan was highly aware that the inward journey of turning to the subject must be made in history (Lonergan 1972, 78; Freire 1985, 128). He spoke of the constitutive function of meaning, where he reminds the reader that the family, state, law and economy are not fixed and immutable entities. Like Freire, he envisioned education as a great means not simply of analysing the current situation but also for its transformation. Lonergan was, moreover, aware of myths of automatic progress, that is, the reality of sin and bias and their implications for blocking the demands of the human spirit in its thrust towards the promotion of true community (Lamb 1988, 255–84). While Lonergan became increasingly conscious of the social and psychic dimensions of self-transcendence and their implications for the development of community, he did not provide any detailed pedagogy for the sociopolitical liberation of the oppressed along the lines developed mainly by Freire (1973; Conn 1978, 297–306). Nonetheless, for him, dialogue entailing a fundamental sense of the self and the other (Cassidy 2006, 869–884) remained central. Pedagogically, Lonergan's approach could perhaps be usefully conjoined with that of Freire, which can be inadvertently imperialistic, especially if humane sensibility is poorly educated (Elias 1999, 105–6; Freedman 2007, 442–73; Buckley 1998, 122). Moreover, concern to treat the school as a community and to approach learning dialogically seems well placed and should supplement Lonergan's transcendental method (Groome 1991, 116–31; 1981, 482–6; 1998; Gelpi 1997, 67; Roy 1991, 160; McLaughlin 2000, 283–9).

Conclusion

It could be said that Vatican II opened the Church's doors to the modern world, eventually including those of the school. Although the nature and degree of this remain debatable, the present article argues that Lonergan's notion of self-transcendence provides a helpful lens on how such a development may be more effective in enabling its diverse educational enterprises worldwide to graduate men and women to go out into a swiftly globalising world with the resources of the

Church's long, rich and living tradition. Perhaps, in the contemporary world where global culture seems to be preoccupied with ideas of self-development, self-satisfaction, self-possession and even self-indulgence, Lonergan's notion of self-transcendence could be central to the construction of a distinctive Catholic educational philosophy. Self-transcendence, with its correlates of a spirituality of wisdom, love and justice, could contribute faithfully to the realisation of a Catholic educational ethos, practice and formation counter-cultural to but discerning towards globalisation (Grace 2002, 14), which is increasingly materialistic, consumerist and self-centred.

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Notes

1. Neo-scholasticism is often dated from Pope Leo XIII' s encyclical, *Aeterni Patris* (1879). It was a somewhat ahistorical reading of the philosophy of the thirteenth century Dominican friar Thomas Aquinas, and underpinned much Catholic thought until the end of Vatican II (1965). The approach was rational, focusing on proofs and speculative reason, but versions of it gradually moved towards being existential. It is, of course, true that Catholic philosophy of education included more than Aristotelian Thomism in its various forms. Moreover, its presence was felt differently in seminaries, schools and colleges. Nonetheless, the overall framework of the educational philosophy of the period was scholastic, operating with a conceptualist metaphysics. Educationally, this resulted in a classical curriculum championed by, among others, the Jesuits. From the perspective of religious education, it entailed an apologetic, catechetical approach with heavy emphasis on transmission and memory (see Buckley 1998, 14; Doyle 2007, 343–56; Nordberg 1987, 134; Groome 1998, 282–3; Meehan 2010, 326; McLaughlin 2002, 121–34; Dupuis and Gordon 2010, 80–8).
2. The philosophy and metaphysics that result from insight into insight will be verifiable (Lonergan 1957, xi; see also Crowe 2003, 187–205).
3. Lonergan always challenged his students and readers to engage in what he called 'self-appropriation'. Simply to read through *Insight* would be futile if the reader does not continually verify the 'cognitional structure' in his own experience and reflection. The main object is 'to discover oneself in oneself' and so to change one's understanding of understanding. More ambitious still, Lonergan's goal was to liberate us from certain dominant assumptions of our culture that equate knowing with external verification. If that is our main way of knowing, then God is off the map. There are no external data on God. But full human knowing takes us beyond the world of the senses (Gallagher 2010, 66).
4. This is a pivotal issue (see Lonergan 1974f, 69–86; 1957, chap. 11).
5. What is at stake is the need for integration providing a holistic viewpoint (see Hindman 2002, 165–82; Buckley 1998, 19–22, 127).
6. Lonergan here draws upon Piaget's concept of assimilation where new experience was incorporated into existing structures, as when, for instance, an infant responds to a new toy by treating it as an already familiar object, interpreting it on the basis of past experience. He noted, 'general education aims primarily at the development of assimilative powers. If one learns to know man through the reading of literature and the study of history, one will have the basis for stepping into the human sciences that is much more useful than the study of the sciences' (Lonergan 1993, 206).
7. Models of thought, even in theology, can be cramped by the assumption that objectivity requires us to see the truth 'as something quite independent of us'. Taylor sees this as a dangerous 'excarnation' of reason, a forgetting of commitment and affectivity as valid roads to knowledge (Gallagher 2010, 113).

8. The Catholic setting, if distinctive, is seen to be rooted in an overarching narrative which is foundational (Buckley 1998, 15–22; Sullivan 2011, 104). It includes a 'standpoint epistemology' (Groome 1998, 286). While this is true, the so-called 'text' needs to be communicated in a way that does not exclude, i.e. confessionally, doctrinally, conceptually, moving in one direction only. Instead, it should be dialogical (see Sullivan 2011; Duminuco 1978, 22–35; Miller 2007, 449–80; Roy 1991, 159–64; Grace 2009a, 915; Walsh 2007).

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