

A SUPERNATURAL NOWHERE: How Radical Orthodoxy and Lonergan Studies Have Failed to Get Along (And Why they Should)

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In this short article I will attempt to clear away just one of the several obstacles to theological collaboration between Lonergan studies and Radical Orthodoxy. For a little less than two decades, John Milbank and Neil Ormerod (both senior scholars in their respective communities) have been unnecessarily dismissive of one another's theological projects. Indeed, both have repeated their long-held, but too facile, critiques in recent publications. In 2014's *Beyond Secular Order*, Milbank continues to accuse Lonergan of imposing quasi-Kantian apriorist anachronisms upon Aquinas' account of the *verbum mentis*, a critique he first leveled in 1997's *The Word Made Strange*.¹ In a 2014 *Theological Studies* article, Neil Ormerod has repeated his evaluation of Milbank's project as an inherently

¹ John Milbank, *Beyond Secular Order: The Representation of Being and the Representation of the People* (Hoboken, NY: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014); John Milbank, *The Word Made Strange: Theology, Language, Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1997). Milbank implies this critique as early as 1990's *Theology and Social Theory*, insofar as he cites Lonergan's *Insight* alongside Rahner's *Spirit in the World* as examples of post-Kantian "Transcendental Thomism," (John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 2 edition [Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006], 296).

conceptualist enterprise, an appraisal he had leveled as early as 1999 in a *Philosophy and Theology* article responding to Milbank's treatment of Lonergan in *The Word Made Strange*.² I am of the opinion that, even more than simply misreading one another, Milbank and Ormerod are missing an opportunity to model a constructive exchange between two theological enterprises, which have more in common than has been heretofore been appreciated. I hope in what follows to both gesture toward a way beyond the misreading and, onwards, to the ground on which a mutually beneficial dialogue between Lonergan studies and Radical Orthodoxy might take place.

I will briefly review that 1999 article by Neil Ormerod criticizing John Milbank's treatment of sources and express my concern with its concluding remarks, which suggest Milbank and Lonergan's projects are dialectically opposed. In order to show why I believe that conclusion is too hasty, I will examine an illustrative passage from Milbank's *Theology and Social Theory* that at the very least complicates the matter in promising ways. In fact, I hope to show how Ormerod and Milbank (and so perhaps Lonergan studies and Radical Orthodoxy in general) share certain important theological commitments that could ground significant theological conversation and collaboration. I will then, finally, try to suggest some potential avenues of conversation in light of Ormerod's more recent scholarly publication on the nature—grace distinction. Ultimately, I hope this can provide some small occasion for expanding dialogue between two theological enterprises that make culture and history central themes.

² Neil Ormerod, "The Grace–Nature Distinction and the Construction of a Systematic Theology," *Theological Studies* 75, no. 3 (September 2014): 515–36; Neil Ormerod, "It Is Easy to See': The Footnotes of John Milbank," *Philosophy & Theology* 11, no. 2 (January 1999): 257–64.

'THE FOOTNOTES OF JOHN MILBANK'

More than 15 years ago, Neil Ormerod published an article in *Philosophy & Theology* criticizing John Milbank for supporting his claims with overly general reference to the sources in question.³ The article considers a short, but Ormerod thinks illustrative, passage from Milbank's *The Word Made Strange* (*TWMS*), in which Milbank offers brief criticism of Bernard Lonergan's *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*.⁴ Lonergan's book (originally five articles published in *Theological Studies*) analyzes Aquinas on the intellect and how the procession of the *verbum mentis*, or inner word, as act from act, can shed some (albeit dim) light on the procession of the Trinitarian persons, pure act from pure act. Milbank attributes to *Verbum* the exegetical position that "the active element in the mind, for Thomas, arises insofar as the mind is able to 'transcend' the intentional concept, or the inner word."⁵ According to Milbank, because Lonergan had overlooked the converging identity of the *forma exemplaris* (which he takes for the 'idea' in Aquinas' work) with the *imago expressa* (which he, even less plausibly, takes for the 'inner word' in Aquinas), Lonergan's work misleads its readers by suggesting that the mind's intentional encounter with 'external *esse*' occurs somewhere in a reaching beyond ("transcending") language. Ormerod's article, after noting the opaqueness of Milbank's prose, fairly dismantles Milbank's criticisms of Lonergan, from the claim that *forma exemplaris* and *imago expressa* are central for Aquinas to his claim that Lonergan is anachronistically imposing a post-Kantian transcendentalism upon Aquinas.

³ Ormerod, "It Is Easy to See."

⁴ Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe S.J. and Robert M. Doran S.J., Vol. 2 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, (Toronto, Ont.: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

⁵ Milbank, *TWMS*, 93.

Ormerod's analysis of Milbank's criticism lands some heavy blows. As the article's title suggests, Milbank's footnotes do little to support the terse certainty with which his claims about Lonergan and Aquinas are made. A single reference to the entirety of Lonergan's *Verbum* (a 250 page volume, Ormerod reminds us) backs Milbank's interpretation thereof. Ormerod also points out that the single article in the *Summa* to which Milbank refers to support his reading of Aquinas fails to mention *forma exemplaris* or *imago expressa*, nor do the root terms *forma* and *imago* appear there at all.⁶ Ormerod goes on to argue that the very text cited (*ST*, I, q27,1) reveals how Milbank conflates image with species or form. This would place Milbank's account at odds with Aquinas' faculty psychology, in which image is grasped by the senses or imagination, but form is grasped by the intellect. Furthermore, Ormerod is certainly right when he goes on to note how Milbank has overlooked the sense in which Lonergan appeals to intellectual transcendence, namely by reference to distinct acts of judgment that follow upon acts of understanding.⁷ Indeed, that is the central point of the psychological analogy for Lonergan; acts of judgment proceed from acts of understanding, as the Son proceeds from the Father, pure act from pure act. Again, I certainly agree with Ormerod that Milbank's claim that Lonergan denies "Aquinas' clearly articulated belief in a relational 'emanation' at the highest level of intellectual act" is as difficult to understand as it is infelicitous with Lonergan's position on

⁶ I will let Ormerod draw the explicit conclusion himself: "So in a text which Milbank chooses for his refutation of Lonergan, a text which is so clearly about Aquinas' analysis of the inner word, we find no reference to the phrases Milbank identifies as central to understanding Aquinas' analysis," (Ormerod, "Milbank's Footnotes," 259).

⁷ On this point, however, I think Ormerod overlooks Milbank's allusion to Maréchal and Rahner in his characterization of Lonergan's account of the mind as actively transcending intentional concepts. Though Milbank is certainly in good company grouping Lonergan with so-called "transcendental Thomism," it is a characterization Lonergan himself resisted, (see Bernard Lonergan, "Philosophy and the Religious Phenomenon," in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, Vol. 17 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, [Toronto, Ont: University of Toronto Press, 2004], 393-4).

intellectual emanation.⁸ Understanding that proceeds unto knowledge (*i.e.*, true judgment) is, in the second chapter of Lonergan's *Verbum*, quite explicitly an ontological participation in uncreated Light.⁹ In any case, not much of Milbank's criticism survives Ormerod's point-by-point evaluation, and some readers of Milbank may feel vindicated, at least anecdotally, for their sneaking suspicions that Milbank's presentation of their favorite figures may have been, well, *not quite right*.

Of course, those who would be further gratified by the rehearsal of Ormerod's now 15 year-old argument against Milbank's reading of Lonergan can find and read the article for themselves. My central concern here is to review a respect in which I think Ormerod uncharacteristically over-extends his evaluation of, and so his conclusions about, Milbank's larger project. Ormerod himself raises the question whether, "at this stage one may wonder what is left of Milbank's critique of Lonergan and his analysis of the inner word." He answers, "Not much on the basis of the evidence provided."¹⁰ Yet Ormerod pushes the matter further on to an evaluation of Milbank's general position on knowledge and language. It

⁸ Ormerod, "Milbank's Footnotes," 261; I am concerned here too that Ormerod misses what is at stake for Milbank in making this criticism of what he no doubt takes to be Lonergan's "post-Kantian transcendentalist" position. Indeed, Ormerod's otherwise well-founded reply to the "transcendentalist" label (namely that Lonergan finds good reason to suppose Aristotle and Aquinas deployed a proto-phenomenology of consciousness in developing their metaphysical accounts of knowledge) offers evidence that he misses the allusion Milbank appears to be making to "transcendental Thomism" and its post-Kantian paths around conceptualist rationalism. As I have already mentioned, this categorization is common, but mistaken with regard to Lonergan's philosophy and theology.

⁹ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 100; Thanks to Dr. Ormerod for pointing out to me that Milbank (with Catherine Pickstock) claims John Jenkins "refuted Lonergan" by resisting "Lonergan's epistemologization of Aquinas theory of truth which is still fundamentally an Augustinian illuminationist one," (see John Milbank and Catherine Pickstock, *Truth in Aquinas* [London: Routledge, 2000], 19, n. 9). Lonergan only "epistemologizes" the theory of truth insofar as he claims that one can only come to discover for one's self the fact of ontological participation in uncreated Light by coming to some modicum of self-knowledge. This claim seems, so far from a Kantian assumption, to be a nearly analytic proposition.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 263.

is at this point that I think Ormerod moves from a detailed and utterly fair dissection of Milbank's excesses to a programmatic dismissal that may not prove charitable, strategic, or quite accurate.

Ormerod's concluding dismissal of Milbank is something of a Lonerganian commonplace: what ails his opponent are undiagnosed conceptualism, an anti-realist rejection of true judgment, and an operative (albeit implicit) notion of the real as "already out there now."¹¹ Certainly these are common enough ailments in our epistemological ecosystem, and so elements of his diagnosis may well, in the final analysis, stick in the case of Milbank. However, I am worried that it may have been arrived at on the basis of the doctor's terminological allergies rather than an adequate examination of the patient's symptoms. That Ormerod refers to Milbank's "linguistic idealism" as "static conceptualism" could tip us off that perhaps the criticism is missing its mark.¹² Many critical adjectives may fit Milbank's ambitious project, but "static" hardly seems one of them.¹³ I would contend that, at least in Milbank's *Theology and Social Theory (TST)*, his "linguistic idealism" opposes itself, not to Lonergan's critical realism, but to the very sorts of naïve realism that overlook the constitutive role meaning plays in the human world, which, it is worth noting, should include not just neo-scholastic

¹¹ I will not go into these in any great detail, but for now it suffices to say that they mean one's interlocutor takes knowing to be a matter of applying universal concepts or signs to the right particular experiences, that he or she takes the incommensurability of universal concepts to particular beings to preclude the possibility of knowing *das Ding an sich*, and takes the criteria of "real beings" to be something like the "already out there now-ness" a kitten attributes to a real saucer of milk as opposed to a hallucination or realistic photo of the same. The entire first part of Lonergan's major philosophic work, *Insight*, is devoted to developing an account of knowledge that accords with the data of cognition given with being intelligently conscious and avoids these epistemological dead-ends, (see Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, 5th edition, Vol. 3 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992]).

¹² Ormerod, "Milbank's Footnotes," 263.

¹³ One of my colleagues has suggested we might better speak of "Milbank's *frenetic* conceptualism."

Thomism, but also all forms of reductive materialism, both scientific and Marxist.¹⁴ If this interpretation of Milbank's linguistic idealism proves plausible, then I propose that those who are convinced by Lonergan's postmodern development of Aquinas' theory of knowledge, like Neil Ormerod and myself, ought to see in Milbank an imperfect ally rather than an irretrievable enemy.

MILBANK'S PREFERRED INTEGRALISM

A survey of Milbank's works, for the sake of evaluating his "linguistic idealism" in general, is beyond the scope of this short study. Instead, much as Ormerod selected a small excerpt to treat as an illustrative instance, I will here excerpt a paragraph from *TST* that, rather than "dialectically opposed horizons," suggests a promising overlap in theological purpose between Lonergan and Milbank (and Ormerod). The passage is taken from Chapter 8, titled, "Founding the Supernatural: Political and Liberation Theology in the Context of Modern Catholic Thought." The chapter opposes an ostensibly Rahnerian approach on the natural-supernatural distinction to an ostensibly Blondelian approach. In the passage at hand, Milbank pits a spatialized construal of the relationship (Rahner) against an understanding that locates the relationship within the generation and transformation of signs and meanings in history and culture (Blondel). This passage, I believe, evinces agreement between Milbank's and Ormerod's approaches to the nature-grace distinction on several topics: the inadequacy of overtly spatial metaphors for construing the grace-nature distinction, the static conceptualism that leads to that kind of spatialization and so hypostatization

¹⁴ The position is, in fact, rather more complicated than even this, since Milbank takes *philosophical* realism to be impossible (and rejects MacIntyre's realism as an instance of this), but says that his final *theological* position "assumes a realist cast," (Milbank, *TST*, 5). In other words, to suggest Milbank's idealism is a) his final position and b) at bottom an anti-realism is to miss the force of his argument about the inadequacy of secular reason.

with regard to the distinction, and the need to think the distinction in terms of history and culture instead. In fact, it was Ormerod's 2014 article in *Theological Studies* on the grace–nature distinction, and Lonergan's potential contribution to theologies thereof, that returned me to this passage in *TST* and, in part, spurred the idea for this little article.¹⁵ I will argue, then, that Ormerod can find an ally in Milbank on this topic and so, perhaps, on others as well. Furthermore, I believe Milbank's concern for moving beyond static concepts of nature and the supernatural (as spatially related "areas" or "regions") to an account of the supernatural as operative through history and its constitutive cultural meanings implies that his so-called "linguistic idealism" resists considering the real as "already out there now" and instead insists on what a Lonergan scholar might call a "world mediated by meaning."¹⁶

Milbank turns to the natural–supernatural relation in Chapter 8 of *TST* out of concern for the possibility of a theology that can respond critically to society. He sees the dominant discourses of Catholic political and liberation theology as committed to an "integralism,"—which Milbank defines as "the view that in concrete, historical humanity there is no such thing as a state of 'pure nature'"—that effectively makes the conclusions of secular social science inviolable. He calls this version of integralism a "Rahnerian transcendentalism."¹⁷ Milbank

¹⁵ Ormerod has also published a short follow up article; see Neil Ormerod, "Addendum on the Grace–Nature Distinction," *Theological Studies* 75, no. 4 (December 2014): 890–898.

¹⁶ Of the world mediated by meaning, Lonergan writes, "As the child learns to speak, he [or she] moves out of the world of his [or her] immediate surroundings towards the far larger world revealed through the memories of other [people], through the common sense of community, through the pages of literature, through the labors of scholars, through the investigations of scientists, through the experience of saints, through the mediations of philosophers and theologians," (Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 2nd ed. [Toronto, Not: University of Toronto Press, 2003], 28.)

¹⁷ Of course, Ormerod's article gives us reason to wonder how representative of Rahner's approach Milbank's characterization may turn out to be. Nonetheless, answering that suspicion will have to remain a task for another day. For now, I will accept Milbank's labels in the interest of accurately representing his position.

characterizes the link between this integralism and an ineffectual political theology as follows:

The social is an autonomous sphere which does not need to turn to theology for its self-understanding, and yet it is already a grace-imbued sphere, and therefore it is *upon* pre-theological sociology or Marxist social theory, that theology must be founded. In consequence, a theological critique of society becomes impossible.¹⁸

Far from aiming to argue against a left-wing politics, Milbank wants to argue instead against this species of integralism in order to bolster left-wing politics against the increasingly unavoidable realization that "it is impossible for anyone to accept any longer that (secular) socialism is simply the inevitable creed of all sane, rational human beings."¹⁹ Instead, he insists Christianity must serve as the norm against which a socialist politics must be measured, rather than the other way around. Milbank believes that if a genuinely theological critique of society and politics will take root, it must do so in the soil of a different kind of integralism. He identifies this alternative integralism with what he calls Blondel's "supernatural pragmatism." He believes this alternative escapes the prison of "the governing modern assumption that *poesis* mark out the sphere of the secular" and "points the way to a postmodern social theology."²⁰ This, in a significant respect, is the point of *TST* as a whole.²¹

¹⁸ Milbank, *TST*, 208.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 209.

²¹ In *TST*'s first chapter, Milbank calls this assumption out as his primary target, writing, "Not only to social scientists, but also to theologians like Harvey Cox, it has consequently seems obvious that the sphere of the artificial, of *factum*, marks out the space of secularity... However, the 'obvious' connection of the *factum* and the secular can and must be called into question," (*Ibid.*, 11).

Thus we turn to the paragraph I have in mind as site of potential cooperation between Milbank and Ormerod, and we turn to it by asking a question: how can Blondel's version of integralism effect such a transition?

Only the French [read: Blondelian] version truly abandons hierarchies and geographies in theological anthropology, because it refuses even to 'formally distinguish' a realm of pure nature in concrete humanity. Nor, for this version, is the encounter with grace situated at the margins of every individual's knowing (as for Rahner), but rather in the confrontation with certain historical texts and images which have no permanent 'place' whatsoever, save that of their original occurrence as events and their protracted repetition through the force of ecclesial allegiance. No social theory can set limits to the capacity of these events to become 'fundamental' for human history, any more than it can in the case of any other events. The version of integralism which 'supernaturalizes the natural' is, therefore, also the more historicist in character, because it does not identify the supernatural as any permanent 'area' of human life. But neither does it locate 'nature', although it recognizes the always finitely mediated character of participation in the supernatural. Where the supernatural impinges as the cultural recurrence of an event, it is at once recognizable as 'different', and, at the same time, as limitlessly capable of transforming all other cultural phenomena. One can conclude that, in avoiding any hypostasization of human nature, in stressing the historical, by insisting that the later and superseding may assume priority over the earlier and apparently more basic, the French version of integralism points in a 'postmodern' direction which has more contemporary relevance than the view of Rahner.²²

Though we are certainly within our rights to echo Ormerod's comments about the difficulty of Milbank's prose, I want to highlight one recurring feature of Milbank's contrast between Rahnerian and Blondelian integralism: a rejection of any construal that *spatializes* the relation between the natural and the supernatural. Milbank prefers Blondel's approach because it "truly abandons *hierarchies* and *geographies* in theological anthropology," and refuses to "formally

²² Ibid., 208–209.

distinguish' a *realm* of pure nature." It does not *situate* grace "at the margins of every individual's knowing," nor identify the supernatural with an "'area' of human life," nor "*locate*" nature within the same.²³ Though he does not explicitly explain this aversion to spatial metaphors for the natural–supernatural distinction, the problem seems to be that they establish impenetrable "zones" for secular and theological reason, such that the constitution of the social (via *poesis*) places it "essentially 'outside' the Church and the basic concerns of theology."²⁴ Recall that, for Milbank, this is the central modern assumption to be overturned by *TST*—namely, that the *factum* is identical with the secular.

Perhaps it is evident, to recur to the *Philosophy & Theology* article with which we began, how Ormerod's assumption that Milbank's reference to "external *esse*" reveals Milbank's fundamental commitment to an "already out there now" real seems generally at odds with at least *this* passage in *TST*.²⁵ Moreover, this passage seems to conflict directly with Ormerod's more recent claim that Milbank's discussion, in his short 2005 book on Henri de Lubac, of a "middle" between the natural and supernatural "spheres" or "realms" evinces a latent conceptualism that "hypostatizes (these) concepts into distinct realities."²⁶ Instead, Milbank's analysis would lead us to ask whether such a diagnosis better suits an ostensibly Rahnerian approach that symbolizes the immanence of the supernatural in terms of an infinitely receding visual horizon found reflexively in every instance of "taking a good look."²⁷ Rather, I take Milbank to be rejecting

²³ Though there it is difficult to determine exactly what Milbank has in mind by "insisting the later and superseding may assume priority over the earlier and apparently more 'basic,'" it does carry the implication that, in addition to rejecting spatializations, Milbank also rejects brute temporality as the deciding factor in distinguishing natural and supernatural.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 208.

²⁵ Ormerod, "Footnotes," 263.

²⁶ See Neil Ormerod, "The Grace–Nature Distinction," 530, n. 44.

²⁷ Against the objection the Rahner and Blondel hold basically the same position, Milbank writes, "Here [in *Spirit in the World*], Rahner argued that, in every act of understanding, the

the logic relating to spatially extended bodies, which precludes two things from occupying the same location at the same time. Within such a spatial logic, that is the foundation of all really meaningful distinctions; one thing is not another because they are not in the same space. But if the natural and the supernatural are not spaces, regions, areas, spheres, or locations, then perhaps we can think their coincidence without collapsing their distinction.²⁸ Or, to put the matter in more Lonergan-centric terms, we might say that Milbank is insisting on a natural–supernatural distinction that is a genuine theory of the distinction, one put in terms of its intelligible and dynamic structures, not a merely static description of its topography.

In what would this theory consist? Milbank’s prescription is more difficult to discern than his proscription against “any hypostatization of human nature,” but I think two central determinations can be identified in the above passage. Rather than synchronic spatializations (or even bare chronologies, *a la* epochal thinking), Milbank thinks political theology and its attendant integralism must be thoroughly *historical* and *cultural*. Events, images, and texts occur and are repeated within an ongoing cultural polity (the Church), and it is precisely in the *cultural recurrence* of these events that we encounter the supernatural.²⁹ Milbank is critical, in fact, of both Henri de Lubac and Hans Urs von Balthasar (both of whom make substantive appeal to Blondel’s philosophy in their theological projects) for “refusing to face up fully to the humanly constructed character of cultural reality” and, thus, failing to identify that process with human

intellect has a preconception (*vorgriff*) of the openness of Being itself, which alone permit grasp of the contingency of the particular object understood. Blonde likewise claims that in every act of understanding, what is understood is not equal to the aspiration of the will. However, Blondel, unlike Rahner, does not understand the transcending capacity of the self only in terms of something permanently in excess of finite instances,” (Milbank, *TST*, 211).

²⁸ And perhaps “the middle” Milbank wants to find in the work of de Lubac is a relation, not a place.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 209.

participation in the supernatural.³⁰ Milbank seems to have in mind that the historical process of encountering, appropriating as constitutive, and creatively re-instantiating, the texts, images, and practices of ecclesial-cultural making *is* the supernatural as immanent to the natural. Lonergan scholars might recognize two familiar notions hiding just underfoot here. First, Milbank seems to hold a commitment to the human world as mediated by meaning. I would wager that Milbank's self-described "linguistic idealism" names precisely this commitment. Second, this mediation of meaning is an inescapably historical process and, in fact, the dynamic unfolding of that process constitutes history itself. Thus, if I may venture another translation, a Lonergan scholar might call the religious dimension of this process the mediated and mediating phases of theological and ecclesial *praxis*.

ANGLES OF APPROACH

Though there remains much about which Ormerod and Milbank can disagree, it seems to me that these two central and organizing commitments—to avoiding spatializing (and so hypostatizing) human nature and to making culture and history central in our theologies—could be the ground on which a substantive collaboration between Radical Orthodoxy and the increasingly broad Lonergan enterprise could be established. Ormerod himself mentions, in the article on the nature–grace distinction mentioned above, the need to move away from an overly compact metaphysical consideration of human nature that “tends to bracket out or mask the social, cultural, and historical dimensions of human existence,” because “human existence ... is fully historically (socially and culturally) constituted.”³¹ Though Ormerod offers Robert Doran's development

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ormerod, “Grace–Nature Distinction,” 530.

of Lonergan's scale of values as a theoretical apparatus for integrating these elements into a theological anthropology, he acknowledges similar concerns to Milbank that such formal determinations can "easily fall over into the type of conceptualist extrinsicism that dominated Catholic theology after Trent" without some more dynamic movement that penetrates across the formal differentiations of our theoretical types, thus linking the social, the cultural, and the historical intrinsically to the supernatural. For this movement, Ormerod appeals to Lonergan's "healing and creating vectors" that supernaturalize human nature in history through God's grace. Ormerod (via Lonergan) perhaps unknowingly echoes Blondel's account of a grace that is doubly "afferent," entering into our human existence both from "without" and from "within," both from "above" and from "below."³²

The dynamic expansion of a relatively compact notion of "human nature" that Ormerod is advocating—namely, a normative scale of values (which includes the social, the cultural, and the religious) as acted upon by creating and healing vectors in history—makes the historical mediation and concretization of religious values an integral feature of understanding human being. Thus, I can imagine Milbank (and Radical Orthodoxy in general) being, at the very least, willing to engage in a dialogue about a broadly compatible intellectual program. The task of an adequately historically-minded theology remains ahead of us, and many hands would make lighter work. I can also imagine that intramural interest would be further piqued by Ormerod's advocacy of Lonergan and Doran's explicitly Trinitarian account of how human meanings and values participate in

³² See, in Oliva Blanchette's intellectual biography of Blondel, the latter's defense of integralism and "Social Catholicism" against the charge of modernism by distinguishing theologies that think of religion as having its source in "efférence" or intra-human emergence, those that identify a single "afference" from without (extrinsicism), and his own that identifies a "double afference" of God's grace from both without and within human beings (integralism), (Oliva Blanchette, *Maurice Blondel: A Philosophical Life* [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010], 232–233).

the supernatural through culture and history. Lonergan's relatively unknown theological theorem, the "four-point hypothesis," has its origins in Lonergan's Latin theology, but Doran has done a great deal of work in the first volume of *The Trinity in History* to elucidate the significance of sanctifying grace and the habit of charity as created participations in the Trinitarian life.³³ One fruit of Doran's development is a rich articulation of the "Law of the Cross," in which the gift of God's love makes truly non-violent political action possible by giving human beings an other-worldly willingness to endure suffering, so that evil might not be returned for evil.³⁴ Such action, and the meanings and values through which a culture might come to promote it, seems generally compatible with Milbank's desire for an ontology of peace with which to resist modern ontologies of violence. I believe that Lonergan scholars can, and should, on this point (and I hope many others) collaborate with those theologians positioned within the Radical Orthodoxy constellation, for the sake of a robust theology of the supernatural in history that may speak a critical and uplifting word to social and political forces for the good of the poor, the grieving, the meek, the merciful, the peacemakers, and the persecuted.

CONCLUSION

By acknowledging how certain Lonerganian habits of critique may have occluded points of shared theological concern between Lonergan studies and Radical Orthodoxy in Ormerod's analysis of Milbank, I have sought to occasion

³³ Robert M. Doran SJ, *The Trinity in History: A Theology of the Divine Missions, Volume 1: Missions and Processions* (Toronto, Ont.: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

³⁴ Of the Law of the Cross, Doran writes, "The supreme good into which fidelity to the Law of the Cross, which enjoins the return of good for evil done, transforms the evils that afflict the human race is the emergence of a new community in history and in the life to come, a community that in theological terms can be understood as the whole Christ, Head and members, whether explicitly Christian or not, in all the concrete determinations and relations constitutive of this community," (see Doran, *The Trinity in History, Vol. 1*, 231–245).

second thoughts about the compatibility of the two on questions of meaning and history. Both Ormerod and Milbank resist static, hypostatizing descriptions of the nature–grace relation, and resist them for the sake of a more sophisticated and dynamic approach to the supernatural. Such an approach would find the supernatural operative in the constructions of human meaning and the contingent unfolding of human history. Both theologies set out heuristic determinations (or, we might say, eschatological expectations) for how political and social structures can be transformed by the entry of God’s love in Jesus Christ into both of these. Furthermore, both theologies, one by implication and the other by design, resist the modern assumption that the secular is co-extensive with the social. Along the way, I have sought to indicate how seemingly opposed manners of speaking (which can be so terminologically allergenic to one another) can, with some exegetical effort, be shown to express quite concordant positions. These can be identified if patient dialogue can persist unto the spontaneous flash of mutual understanding.