INSIGHTS AND DISCLOSURES: A STUDY OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL THEOLOGY OF BERNARD LONERGAN AND IAN RAMSEY

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by

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Abstract

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The thesis compares and contrasts some aspects of the philosophical theology of Canadian Jesuit Bernard Lonergan (1904 - 1984) and Anglican Bishop Ian Ramsey (1915 - 1972). We ask whether the views of two theologians from very different backgrounds can be compatible. Lonergan and Ramsey both thought that modern science was a key resource for examining how intentional cognitive activity in humans is undertaken and hence science and scientific method give a strong indication of how we think and talk about God, theology and theological method.

We therefore start with the authors' views of science and scientific method, noting similarities alongside a crucial difference: Ramsey emphasises the scientific use of models, while Lonergan emphasises the precision of mathematics. We then argue that their descriptions of cognitive processes are similar, albeit with some differences. The differences in the views of models are emphasised in our comparison of their understandings of language and meaning. We suggest that while the views are different they are compatible and we propose a hybrid model for religious language based on an integration and synthesis of both authors' views.

The discussion draws together around theological method. Lonergan proposed several methods in his work and we discuss two. Ramsey did not describe an explicit method, but a consistent approach can be found in his theological writings. These methods are then compared with the authors' theological writings in a case study, the atonement. We argue that Lonergan follows neither of his methods and that both he and Ramsey have a flexible approach to the process of doing theology. The discussions of theological method, supplemented by earlier considerations of models and method are used to suggest a hybrid theological method. This generalises Lonergan's method, includes Ramsey's process and yields a model whereby we can discuss how theology is done.

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Even though mine is the name on the title page of this work this only means that the responsibility for errors lies with me. No work of scholarship is even started, let alone completed, in a vacuum. Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Matthew Knell, who has always had a far clearer vision of the nature of the thesis than I, and has also patiently read through about half a million words of mine over the last few years. His encouragement and wisdom have been invaluable. I would also like to thank my second supervisor Dr. William Atkinson for advice and encouragement along the way and ensuring that I have kept to the processes required by LST and Middlesex University.

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In *Caring about Meaning* (p. 109) Lonergan remarks that the problem with writing a comparative thesis is that the student writes three dissertations, one on each author and then another on the comparison. I would like to thank those friends and colleagues who have encouraged me along the way when it has felt that I had bitten off far more than I can chew. In no particular order these include Eleanor, Peter, Sarah, Catherine, Liz, Christine and Christine. The readers and in particular commenters on posts of my hobby blog Polemarch also deserve thanks as they have, unwittingly, been the sounding board for some of the ideas about models and method presented here. I would also like to thank Sam, Bob and Nicola who, as line managers, have been generous with offers of study leave and other resources to enable the completion of the thesis.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This thesis considers the philosophical and theological works of Canadian Jesuit Bernard Lonergan (1904 - 1982) and Church of England Bishop Ian Ramsey (1915 - 1972). Although different in background, outlook and ecclesiology, the hypothesis is that Lonergan's 'insight' epistemology and Ramsey's 'disclosure' view of human cognition are compatible and hence their starting points for theological philosophy are similar. Developments in their thought from their ideas on cognitive process, on topics such as the relation of theology to science, religious language and theological method will be compared and contrasted, based on the exploration of the initial hypothesis.

Although the contexts of the work of Lonergan and Ramsey were very different, they both existed in roughly the same intellectual climate and responded to the same issues, namely the dominance of empiricism in mid-twentieth century philosophy and the emerging belief that only science provides knowledge of reality. Lonergan and Ramsey were both concerned to counteract the increasing claims of natural science to hegemony over knowledge. Ramsey observed that science and religion have more in common than many thought; Lonergan conceded that the method of natural science was a useful tool for observing how our minds work intentionally, and that the Aristotelian assumptions about science on which some theology was based had to be abandoned. Neither author, however, was prepared to concede the field of knowledge to science, nor admit that theology and metaphysics were non-sense, as the logical positivists were claiming.

Both authors, therefore, have a claim to speak into the cultural and religion-science debates of today. While the philosophy of logical positivism has been swept away, the empiricism and reductionism of modern scientific method still leads to claims that science has 'disproved' religion, at least at the popular level, and that everything in human experience can and should be subject to experiment. Both Ramsey and Lonergan use the ideas of science as examples of human thinking, but neither believes that these ideas are the only way in which we can know. Human thought and experience is much wider than the narrow confines of scientific materialist empiricism.

Lonergan regarded scientific thought as intentional and it therefore has a method which can be described. By analogy, theology, which is also intentional, has a method, and he considered what might constitute it at some length. Ramsey did not explicate a theological method, but he did pursue his theological activities in a methodical way. A method is not a prescription, but

a guide to progress. Lonergan describes a method explicitly; Ramsey shows a method implicitly. We suggest that any description of a method is necessarily incomplete, but by uniting the two methods we can obtain a richer and more complete concept of how theology can be done.

1.2 Originality of the Thesis

As will be discussed below (Section 1.5.2) there has been little interaction between the thinking of Lonergan and Ramsey. So far as is known, this will be the first time that their ideas have been compared and brought into dialogue in any depth. The hypothesis is that Ramsey's 'disclosure' way of coming to know, of the penny dropping and the clouds parting, is describing the same process as Lonergan's 'insight' cognitional process. As we will see, both thinkers view modern scientific process as a paradigm of intentional thought; that common starting point enables us to compare their ideas about human cognitional process.

Once the commonality of Lonergan's and Ramsey's thinking on dynamic cognition is established, we start to find differences in their ideas about language, and in how they go about their theological projects. We find that their ideas on language are different, but not incompatible, and we develop a model to incorporate both. We explore their theological methods both in the abstract and in a case study. Lonergan gives several explicit methods for theology; Ramsey uses an implicit but consistent method. While the theological end points in the case study at which they arrive are similar, their approaches are different and Lonergan's theological discussion does not follow his own methods. Using evidence from the case study on atonement as well as the considerations of theological method we develop a generalised theological method which encompasses both Lonergan's method and Ramsey's implicit process.

1.3 Lonergan

Lonergan's thought is complex and dense. Many people find him inaccessible and forbidding, and there is a small industry in introductions to his work.[1] Lonergan's reputation has caused the creation of a 'Lonergan School', consisting of scholars working within the paradigm of Lonergan's work. This school can sometimes seem to be rather defensive and inward looking.

[1] F. E. Crowe, *Lonergan*, (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1992); R. M. Liddy, *Startling Strangeness: Reading Lonergan's Insight*, (Lanham: University Press of America, 2007); H. Meynell, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Bernard Lonergan*, (London: Macmillan, 1976); M. T. Miller, *The Quest for God and the Good Life*, (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2013); T. J. Tekippe, *What Is Lonergan up to in "Insight"? A Primer*, (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996); T. J. Tekippe, *Bernard Lonergan: An Introductory Guide to Insight*, (Mahwah, N. J.: Paulist Press, 2003); The Fellows of the Woodstock Theological Center, *The Realms of Desire: An Introduction to the Thought of Bernard Lonergan*, (Washington DC: Woodstock Theological Center, 2011); D. Tracy, *The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan*, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970).

Walmsley notes that on occasion neither Lonergan nor his supporters communicate effectively, and that there has been little engagement between Lonergan scholars and those in the analytic tradition.[2]

Lonergan's early training included mathematics as well as the classics.[3] He also studied logic, which gave him an understanding of scientific method.[4] The ideas of mathematics and scientific method are key to Lonergan's writings, but he never seems to have studied any particular science; his knowledge of physics seems to have derived from a single work, at least in *Insight*.[5] This can give Lonergan's account of physics a lopsidedly mathematical slant (see Section 2.2).

The key to understanding Lonergan's work is his dynamic structure of intentional human cognition.[6] This is described in Section 3.2. Lonergan has four levels of cognitional activity: experience, understanding, judgment and decision. This pattern recurs in Lonergan's thought on meaning, society and scientific and theological method. For example, the level of experience is related to the common sense realm of meaning; that of understanding is related to theory; judgment relates to interiority and decision to transcendence. Within each realm the full cognitive process is occurring. In the common sense realm things are related to me: I can catch a ball. In the realm of theory, things are related to other things: I can describe the trajectory of the ball with certain conditions of gravity, wind and initial velocity and trajectory. At the third level my catching the ball requires a judgement, to place my hands here. Finally, there is a decision: I shut my hands now. This pattern recurs in Lonergan's thinking.

Crowe argues that Lonergan's theological work can be seen as a process of withdrawal and at best partial return.[7] Lonergan's work in theology is the arena in which he worked out his method, and he then forged a new tool, an *organon* to match Aristotle and Bacon, but did not manage to apply it to the problems of theology. That job is left for later generations.[8]

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[2] G. Walmsley, 'Investigating Lonergan's Inaccessibility', *The Heythrop Journal* 26, 1 (1985), 47-56. See also J. Fitzpatrick, *Philosophical Encounters: Lonergan and the Analytic Tradition*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 3.
[3] Crowe, *Lonergan*, 13.
[4] B. J. F. Lonergan, *Caring About Meaning: Patterns in the Life of Bernard Lonergan*, (Montreal: Thomas More Institute, 1982), 3-4.
[5] R. B. Lindsay and H. Margenau, *Foundations of Physics*, (Woodbridge, CT: Ox Bow, 1981 [1936]). B. J. F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, 5th rev. ed., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 24.
[6] Lonergan, *Insight*. B. J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2017), Chapter 1.
[7] F. E. Crowe, *Method in Theology: An Organon for Our Time*, (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1980), 56-7.
[8] Crowe, *Organon*, 48-9.

On the structure of his cognitional process, Lonergan builds a theological method. Lonergan's theological method has been widely debated and critiqued, and some of the discussion is outlined in Chapter 5. It is perhaps fairest to say that the case for Lonergan's theological method being a new *organon* is unproven, certainly outside Lonergan scholars. While it is straightforward to accept that Lonergan's functional specialties are part of a theological method, Lonergan's way of arranging them may owe more to his cognitional process than to how theology is actually done.

Lonergan is usually classified as a critical realist, although that term is not used in *Insight*.[9] Lonergan characterises his position as a realism, 'between which and materialism the halfway house is idealism'.[10] Morelli suggests that this idealism is Hegelian, a position (as opposed to a Lonergan counter-position) which is incomplete.[11]

Lonergan characterises empiricism as a 'knowing' of the 'already out there now real'.[12] It is a 'bundle of blunders', wherein we observe, understand and judge but do not believe that we do anything except observe the 'already out there now real'.[13] Empiricism, according to Lonergan, assumes that what is obvious in knowing, looking, is what knowing obviously is. This assumption is false.[14] Empiricism restricts knowledge to sense experience. Idealism insists that knowing also includes an act of understanding. The world of immediacy is the sum of sense experience, but it is a fraction of the world mediated by meaning. Reality, for the critical realist, is not just what is looked at. It is given in experience, organised by understanding, verified by judgment and put into practice by decision. The empiricist misses the second and third step, the idealist the third.[15]

Many, although not all scientists are critical realists.[16] Lonergan claims that Thomist and scientific thought are isomorphic. Understanding is the key to both modes of thought. Thomist and scientific thought derive from understanding in different ways. Scientists do not reflect on acts of understanding but perform them in large numbers. Thomists reflect on the acts

[9] C. Friel, 'Lonergan and Bhaskar: The Intelligibility of Experiment', *The Heythrop Journal* 60, 1 (2019), 55-78, 55.
[10] Lonergan, *Insight*, 22.
[11] M. D. Morelli, 'Lonergan's Debt to Hegel and the Appropriation of Critical Realism', in *Fifty Years of Insight*, ed. N. Ormerod, R. Koning, and D. Braithwaite (Adelaide: ATF Theology, 2011), 1-16, 6. For a definition of a position, see Lonergan, *Insight*, 413. See Section 5.2.1.
[12] Lonergan, *Insight*, 277.
[13] Lonergan, *Insight*, 437.
[14] Lonergan, *Insight*, 441.
[15] Lonergan, *Method*, 224.
[16] S. McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 132.

themselves to reach a fundamental rational psychology harmonized with a fundamental metaphysics.[17]

There has been much work on Lonergan over the decades since the publication of *Insight*. Indeed, the bibliography issued by the Lonergan Research Insitiute runs to over seven hundred pages.[18] It is clearly impossible to summarise the range and breadth of this work. The main issues for this thesis are the relations between human cognition, science, theology and their associated methods and these areas are addressed below.

Polkinghorne quotes Lonergan: 'God is the unrestricted act of understanding, the eternal rapture glimpsed in every Archimedian cry of 'Eureka'.'[19] Polkinghorne is a critical realist in science and, as he believes in the ultimate integrity and unity of human knowledge, he wishes to extend this realism to include theological reflection and encounter with the divine. Polkinghorne also believes that it is impossible to capture the essence of scientific method. Different proposals, such as those of Popper or Lakatos, yield aspects of the method, but fall short of a full account. Polkinghorne accepts Polanyi's point that science is a human activity and scientists draw on tacit skills to seek truth about the physical world. This can no more be captured by a particular description of scientific method than any other human activity.[20]

If Lonergan bases his theological method on an analogy with scientific method then Polkinghorne's point suggests that Longeran's theological method is incomplete at best. Efforts to extend the functional specialties in Lonergan's method,[21] while helpful in themselves, do not address this issue. That does not render Lonergan's ideas about theological (or scientific) method irrelevant, any more than various ideas about scientific method are irrelevant, but it should promote caution in accepting and using the method.

A partial aim of the thesis is to provide an account of Lonergan's views of cognitive process, science and scientific method, language and theological method. This is used, in part, to underpin a coherent extension of Ramsey's views of these topics. We find that Ramsey's thought is rather fragmented while Lonergan's is more coherent, but that in some circumstances, Ramsey's account of a particular field, such as models in science and theology,

[17] B. J. F. Lonergan, 'Isomorphism of Thomist and Scientific Thought', in *Collection*, ed. F. E. Crowe and R. M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1988), 133 - 141, 139-40.
[18] As of March 2017; http://www.lonerganresearch.org/resources/lonergan-bibliography/.
[19] Lonergan, *Insight*, 706. J. Polkinghorne, *Belief in God in an Age of Science*, (New Haven: Yale Nota Bene, 1998), 110.
[20] Polkinghorne, *Belief in God in an Age of Science*, 105-6. M. Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1962).
[21] For example R. M. Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?*, (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2005).

is to be preferred to Lonergan's. Ramsey's views, amalgamated with Lonergan's, can provide a more complete description of theological method.

1.4 Ramsey

Ramsey's work was always somewhat controversial, with arguments over what he meant by the term 'disclosure' and even accusations of a form of Christian atheism.[22] Ramsey is usually classified as an empiricist, and he certainly seems to have aimed directly at challenging the then current anti-metaphysical philosophy of logical positivism or empiricism.[23] 'Contemporary philosophy', Ramsey states, 'lays on us an urgent task and duty, viz. to elucidate the logic of theological assertions'.[24]

The nature of Ramsey's empiricism needs a little nuancing, however. He is not a 'narrow' empiricist in the sense that the logical positivists ruled out metaphysics. Soskice characterises Ramsey's position as 'Christian Empiricism'. He objected to the claim that his views reduced theistic models to subjectivism. He does not wish to restrict his claims to what is strictly observable, but it could be claimed that he should be constrained to do so by his empiricism. He cannot justify his move from disclosure to traditional Christian models. Ramsey would have served his purposes better, Soskice claims, if he had turned to a theological realism.[25]

Soskice's point can, I think, be conceded without, in fact, causing much damage to Ramsey's project. Ramsey was not attempting to defend a strict empiricism, but wished for a broadened empiricism and a chastened metaphysics.[26] While much of his language and the basis for his reflection are couched in empiricist terms, he was aiming for a wider understanding of empiricism than logical positivism allowed, or perhaps, than Soskice is prepared to allow him. I agree, therefore, that Ramsey may have needed to be rid of the label of 'Christian Empiricism', as Soskice suggests, for he was not a narrow empiricist.[27]

An argument of this thesis is that Ramsey's understanding of disclosure, when enhanced and augmented by Lonergan's cognitive process, transforms the former into a form of theological realism. Soskice contends that the theological realist can make metaphysical claims. Both

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[22] N. Smart, 'The Intellectual Crisis of British Christianity', in *Christian Empiricism*, ed. J. H. Gill (1974), 230 - 236, 231.
[23] D. L. Edwards, *Ian Ramsey, Bishop of Durham - a Memoir*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 23.
[24] I. T. Ramsey, *Religious Language: An Empirical Placing of Theological Phrases*, (London: S.C.M., 1957), 14.
[25] J. M. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 145-8.
[26] 'Broader empiricism': I. T. Ramsey, ed., *John Locke: The Reasonableness of Christianity with a Discourse of Miracles and Part of a Third Letter Concerning Toleration* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958), 20. 'Chastened metaphysics': J. H. Gill, *Ian Ramsey: To Speak Responsibly of God*, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1976), 112; W. B. Williamson, *Ian Ramsey*, (Waco: Word, 1982), 139.
[27] Soskice, *Metaphor*, 147-8.

Ramsey and Lonergan do make such claims and, therefore, Ramsey is closer to theological realism than Soskice believes or Ramsey may have admitted.

Ramsey is often portrayed as a philosopher of religious language, but his interests ranged wider than this. In attempting to answer the charges of logical empiricism, he examined the differences between science and religion and the stress on the differences and independence of these disciplines.[28] His view was that the two were not incompatible. In particular, he popularised the notion that 'theological language is rich in models'[29] and that these models are in many respects similar to those of science.[30]

Originally Ramsey aimed to be a mathematical physicist and took mathematics at Cambridge, before switching to philosophy.[31] Examples from mathematics and the physical sciences in particular pervade his work, even when he is not discussing science and religion. As we shall describe below, Ramsey sees science, mathematics and theology as running in parallel, products of the same sorts of human minds grasping disclosures.

A problem with some of the commentators on Ramsey's work is that they take a rather narrow view of his works, often not moving beyond *Religious Language*.[32] Ramsey wrote extensively on theology as well as the philosophy of religious language, although often his theological work suggests that there are problems with how we understand religious language. While Ramsey did not explicitly describe a theological method, he did have a reasonably consistent approach to theological problems and this was based on his approach to human cognition.

Ramsey did not found a 'school' and his name is perhaps not widely known today. However, his views, particularly on religious language and on the related but distinct area of models in science and theology have been influential. McFague uses his ideas on models, although she regards them as more static, substance oriented and descriptive than Ricoeur.[33] She sees Ramsey as being an empirical brother to Aquinas and that they both see models as being used for talking about the nature of God. The models of the great theologians, she claims, do not have this substance orientation but are concerned with the relation between God and humans.[34] She does agree, however, that to express the human-divine relationship many

[28] I. T. Ramsey, 'Religion and Science: A Philosopher's Approach', in *Christian Empiricism*, ed. J. H. Gill (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 143 - 158, 143.
[29] Soskice, *Metaphor*, 103.
[30] I. T. Ramsey, *Models and Mystery*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 21.
[31] Edwards, *Ramsey*, 19-20, 22.
[32] For example R. Trigg, *Reason and Commitment*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 77-80.
[33] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 124.
[34] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 125.

models will be necessary. McFague classifies Ramsey, in fact, as a 'critical realist' on the basis that he believes that models have a real, if indirect, reference to reality.[35]

Polkinghorne uses Ramsey's ideas on the logical oddness of religious language.[36] He suggests that Ramsey's philosophical theology is based upon a moment of disclosure where the penny drops, and suggests that this may not only happen in the religious sphere. Polkinghorne links Ramsey's religious disclosure to Lonergan's idea of religious conversion as being grasped by ultimate concern, but he does not exploit this similarity.[37] Logical oddness, Polkinghorne quotes Ramsey as saying, is known best in worship, a situation of both discernment and commitment, a realm of 'liturgy assisted logic'.[38] Polkinghorne, however, does not make use of Ramsey's ideas about models; he does quote Lonergan's description, although he seems to fail to note that Lonergan is referring to models in the social sciences.[39]

The issue here is that to focus on Ramsey's view of the logical oddness of religious language is to underrate his work on the idea of religious language as a 'qualified model' and, hence, fail to engage with Ramsey's ideas about the use of models in both science and theology. This, again, leads to a somewhat narrow view of Ramsey's theological philosophy, although it does have to be conceded that Ramsey did not put forward a full account of his ideas.[40] Even Evans, whose aim is to provide a coherent view of Ramsey's thought, does not focus on his ideas of the relationship of science with theology.

Williams suggests that Ramsey's work on religious language is unfairly neglected.[41] Saxbee thinks that debates over science and religion would have been more attractive if greater account had been taken of Ramsey's views.[42] Part of the aim of this thesis is to provide a more balanced account of Ramsey's thought and, by integrating it with that of a more systematic thinker, defragment it and aim to move the debate over religious language, method, and science and faith forward.

1.5 Resonances

So far as I am aware, Lonergan's and Ramsey's works have never been compared in any detail. There has been some work, however, where the two have, at least, been mentioned in the same article or chapter. Section 1.5.2 will describe these works. There is also the interesting

[35] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 132.
[36] J. Polkinghorne, *Reason and Reality*, (London: SPCK, 1991), 16-9.
[37] Lonergan, *Method*, 226.
[38] Polkinghorne, *Reason and Reality*, 18; Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 49.
[39] Polkinghorne, *Reason and Reality*, 23. Lonergan, *Method*, 266-7.
[40] D. Evans, 'Ian Ramsey on Talk About God', *Religious Studies* 7, 2 (1971), 125-140, 126.
[41] R. Williams, *The Edge of Words: God and the Habits of Language*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 173.
[42] J. Saxbee, 'A Man in Tune with His Times,' *Church Times*, 23 January 2015, 22.

possibility that Lonergan's and Ramsey's thought is compatible in some way because they draw, in part, on the thought of Aquinas and Joseph Butler, either indirectly or directly. Section 1.5.1 will examine this possibility.

1.5.1 Antecedent Work: Common Sources

Lonergan spent 'years reaching up to the mind of Aquinas'.[43] His early work was focussed on interpreting Aquinas and he still referred extensively to him in later writings.[44] Ramsey too observes that in principle he has been doing what Thomas was doing, although without his system and ontology.[45] Both Ramsey and Lonergan draw on the traditions of Western theology and philosophy. While neither make a major point of explicitly referencing the tradition, it is well to bear in mind that both are influenced by it.

Lonergan is widely known to have drawn upon some of the thought of Newman, particularly the illative sense described in *The Grammar of Assent*.[46] Newman's illative sense became Lonergan's reflective act of understanding.[47] Newman himself draws on Butler. Conviction rests on converging probabilities, not on a chain of proof which is only as strong as its weakest link.[48] Butler argues that probability is the guide to life.[49] Further, Butler states, we cannot wait for the perfect argument, but must make a choice and take action.[50] Lonergan does not seem to directly reference Butler, but his examination of probability and emergence in *Insight*[51] and the necessity of making decisions in *Method*[52] may owe something to this ancestry.

Ramsey also draws upon Butler. Self-awareness is more than body awareness; such a discernment lies at the base of religion: there are situations which are spatio-temporal 'and more'.[53] However, Tennant suggests that Ramsey misrepresents Butler as arguing that

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[43] Lonergan, *Insight*, 769.
[44] B. J. F. Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1997); B. J. F. Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas*, (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2000).
[45] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 185.
[46] J. H. Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, (Assumption Press, 2013 [1870]), 225-250.
[47] B. J. F. Lonergan, 'Insight Revisited', in *A Second Collection*, ed. R. M. Doran and J. D. Dadosky (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 221-233, 221. D. B. Burrell, 'Newman in Retrospect', in *The Cambridge Companion to John Henry Newman*, ed. I. Ker and T. Merrigan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 255-274, 262-4.
[48] S. Giley, 'Life and Writings', in *The Cambridge Companion to John Henry Newman*, ed. I. Ker and T. Merrigan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1-28, 13.
[49] J. Butler, *The Analogy of Religion*, (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1906 [1736]), Author's Introduction, xxv.
[50] Giley, 'Life and Writings', 13.
[51] Lonergan, *Insight*, 81-5; 144-8.
[52] Lonergan, *Method*, 18, 117.
[53] Butler, *Analogy*, 111. Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 15.

conscience must be obeyed because it is conscience.[54] Butler, Tennant says, is fully aware that conscience can be underdeveloped or diseased. Further, Tennant argues that Ramsey is incorrect in seeing Butler's probabilistic system as making his forensic concept redundant.[55] However, Ramsey sees Butler's life and thought as being all of a piece. Therefore it is unlikely that Ramsey meant to separate Butler's probabilistic and forensic concepts.[56]

Disputes over interpretation aside, it is clear that both Lonergan's reflective act of understanding, via Newman, and Ramsey's 'and more' discernment owe something to Butler. Given that these are key aspects of both authors' thought on cognitive process the correctness of our hypothesis, that their ideas on human understanding are similar, is unsurprising.

Lonergan's and Ramsey's uses of the wider Western philosophical tradition rarely overlap as with Butler and Aquinas. For example, Ramsey draws quite extensively on Berkeley;[57] Lonergan regards Berkeley as a naïve idealist and suggests that his claim that *esse est percipi* mixes the world mediated by meaning (*esse*) and that of immediacy.[58] Both Ramsey and Lonergan make some reference to Kant. Ramsey uses his ideas of 'Duty' as a key word included in another key word, 'God', for example.[59] Lonergan sees Kant as marking a dividing line when philosophy turned to the subject, but that he found only a more complicated way of confusing things.[60] Beside Butler and Aquinas, therefore, there seems little overlap in Lonergan's and Ramsey's use of the tradition.

1.5.2 Subsequent Work: Near Comparisons

While there are a number of writers who mention both Lonergan and Ramsey, no one has really brought the two into direct dialogue. Beirne has an extensive section on how Lonergan might extend Ramsey's work, but does not implement her suggestions. Tracy uses both authors but does not integrate their work. Loughlin usefully discusses Lonergan's and Ramsey's views on doctrine, but does not attempt to contrast them. Other authors do mention both

[54] B. Tennant, *Conscience, Consciousness and Ethics in Joseph Butler's Philosophy and Ministry*, (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2011), 9.
[55] Tennant, *Conscience, Consciousness and Ethics*, 93.
[56] I. T. Ramsey, *Joseph Butler, 1692-1752: Some Features of His Life and Thought*, (London: Dr. William's Trust, 1969), 14-6.
[57] For example I. T. Ramsey, 'Berkeley and the Possibility of an Empirical Metaphysics', in *New Studies in Berkeley's Philosophy*, ed. W. E. Steinkraus (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1966), 13 - 30; I. T. Ramsey, *Religion and Science: Conflict and Synthesis*, (London: SPCK, 1964), 86-7; I. T. Ramsey, 'A Personal God', in *Prospect for Theology: Essays in Honour of H. H. Farmer*, ed. F. G. Healey (Welwyn, Herts: James Nisbet, 1966), 55 - 71, 57. See J. Astley, 'Ian Ramsey's Early Thought and Its Development', *The Durham University Journal* 76 (1984), 157-167.
[58] Lonergan, *Method*, 247.
[59] I. T. Ramsey, *Freedom and Immortality*, (London: SCM Press, 1960), 53.
[60] Lonergan, *Method*, 247.

Ramsey and Lonergan, but do not compare the two. Those works which reference both authors are discussed here.

Beirne's work focusses mainly on the varieties of disclosures that Ramsey uses in his work. [61] She categorizes them into seven types: sense experience, scientific, mathematical, personal, self, moral and cosmic disclosures. As such, the book is a useful compendium of Ramsey's disclosures and a view of how his thought, or at least examples, changed over time.

In the conclusion, Beirne suggests that Ramsey's thought evolved. He started by trying to justify religious language within the model of empiricism. That model needed adjusting, and Ramsey first tried to enlarge the language map to include metaphysical words. Moving beyond this, he explored the experience of disclosure. The objectivity of the experience is in its active nature, on the part of both the self and the object, the Other. In knowing the Other in a disclosure we come to know ourselves. The key here is the challenge of cognitive activity.[62]

Ramsey could have asked 'What have I been doing in 'pointing to' disclosures?' If he had inquired about his own cognitive activity, he would have posed a basic philosophical question about cognitive theory, and started to construct an epistemological framework. Beirne suggests that this is the equivalent of Lonergan's question 'what is happening when we are knowing?' This, Lonergan argues, leads to the metaphysical question 'what is known when this is happening?'[63]

Beirne claims that Lonergan's self-appropriation moves through the cognitive sphere from the objects of mathematical, scientific and common sense understanding, to the acts of understanding themselves, to an understanding of understanding. Part of this trajectory can be seen in Ramsey, but he did not reach the level of understanding of understanding.[64]

Lonergan and Ramsey were independent thinkers, and Beirne thinks that the former would appreciate Ramsey's examples of disclosure. Rather than Ramsey's 'pointing', however, Lonergan developed a full theory of knowledge. As an empiricist, Ramsey would be limited, in Lonergan's view, to 'taking a look'. But Ramsey kept pointing to the description and 'more'. Knowing is not merely descriptive but explanatory. We move from descriptive frameworks to explanatory frameworks to a transcendental framework.

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[61] E. Beirne, *The Logic of Disclosures: The Works of Ian Thomas Ramsey*, (New York: Morris Publishing, 1996).
[62] Beirne, *Logic of Disclosures*, 111.
[63] Lonergan, *Insight*, 16-7. Lonergan, *Method*, 27.
[64] Lonergan, *Insight*, 374n.

For Beirne, Ramsey's empirical model is limited because explanations are not descriptions. Knowing involves explanation and is not just sensory. Empiricism is limited to description. Beirne gives the example of 'I' as a concept that empiricism cannot handle.[65] The empirical framework can only deal with 'body' and not with 'thing' as substance or unity.[66]

Thus, for Lonergan, metaphysics is possible as the ultimate explanation of the world. Transcendence is then an issue which turns on the need to explain the cosmos. Humans have a drive to know the truth which is a questioning. The cognitive process goes on and on. Its object is everything there is to be known, an unrestricted object named being or the concrete universe.

Beirne suggests that Lonergan's 'concrete universe' corresponds, roughly, to Ramsey's 'universe as a whole'. Ramsey alluded to the self-affirming aspect of cosmic disclosures, but avoided explaining exactly what a disclosure is, or why some people never grasp the concept. Lonergan describes this as 'flight from insight', and describes various biases which prevent it.

According to Beirne, Ramsey, in Lonergan's terms, offers a position and a counter-position. His position is given by his notion of a disclosure and the claim that a cosmic disclosure is of the universe as a whole and results in the self-affirmation of the subject. Beirne does not think that Ramsey held that intelligent inquiry and critical reflection are necessary to objectivity. Some of Ramsey's biblical examples were the result of the activity of God, for example.

From Lonergan's perspective Ramsey has a group bias towards empiricism and did not gain full reflective insight, and he failed to self-appropriate the cognitive activity that he did have direct insight into. He insisted on remaining within the framework of empiricism. While he recognised this as an inconsistency, he did not do anything about it. Beirne, following Lonergan, thinks that as counter-positions invite reversal and positions invite development, Ramsey's thought can be the subject of both. However, she does not go on to do this.[67]

It is possible that Beirne, by focussing on Ramsey's examples of disclosures, has under-emphasised the more metaphysical statements that he makes, and over-emphasised the narrow empiricism which Ramsey, in fact, criticises. Ramsey does not seem to think that description is the same as knowledge. In terms, for example, of science, for Ramsey, the labels we apply to things have ontological meaning, and are not just descriptive shorthand.

[65] Beirne, *Logic of Disclosures*, 101.
[66] See Lonergan, *Insight*, Chapter 8. P. Kidder, 'What Is a Thing for Lonergan?', *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 7, 1 (1989), 1-17.
[67] Beirne, *Logic of Disclosures*, 111-6.

Overall, Beirne does engage with both Ramsey and Lonergan, but does not strictly compare the two. She is making a suggestion for further development, of replacing Ramsey's rather vague ideas of cognitive process with Lonergan's epistemology and metaphysics. Our argument in this thesis is that the two are compatible and that Lonergan's ideas can be used to augment and extend Ramsey's. We have attempted to undertake what Beirne suggested.

Tracy obtains his 'basic' notion of a model (or ideal type) from Lonergan:[68]

> Models, then, stand to the human science, to philosophies, to theologies, much as mathematics stands to the natural sciences. For models purport to be, not descriptions of reality, not hypotheses about reality, but simply interlocking sets of terms and relations.[69]

Tracy distinguishes 'disclosure' and 'picture' models following Black and Ramsey.[70] He asserts that theological models are disclosure models. He aims to develop Lonergan's notion of a model by uniting it with his intentionality analysis. The basic models that Tracy identifies in contemporary theology are developed by him in accordance with the subject and object poles of each theological horizon.[71] Theological models, for Tracy, do not provide exact representations of the realities they disclose, but re-present them. They are to be taken seriously but not literally.

For Tracy, Lonergan's central concept is 'self-transcendence'.[72] We live authentically insofar as we live in an expanding horizon. The expansion is the 'going beyond' in accordance with the transcendental imperatives: be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, be responsible, develop and if necessary, change. The real world is affirmed and constituted by what we understand and can give evidence for. We cannot imagine, literally, the theories of quantum mechanics, but we can understand and affirm them.

The questions for intelligence, reflection and deliberation are the existential conditions for being an authentic human. A scientist may inquire into the possibility of fruitful inquiry, reflect on their scientific judgment, and deliberate on their need to evaluate their finding in accordance with ethical values. For example, the question may arise for the scientist of

[68] D. Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology*, (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), 34 n 1.
[69] Lonergan, *Method*, 266-7.
[70] Ramsey, *Models and Mystery*; M. Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962).
[71] Tracy, *The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan*, 1 - 22.
[72] Tracy, *Blessed Rage*, 96.

whether the world could be intelligible if it does not have an intelligent ground. These limit questions are not imposed on the scientist, but arise within the scientist's own horizon.[73]

Tracy finds Ramsey's analysis of religious language 'intriguing'.[74] Religious statements point logically to situations which involve odd personal discernment and total commitment. Odd language is appropriate to such a situation. Ramsey appeals to ideas about metaphors: meaning is emergent from the interaction of 'literal' words. Religious language is appropriate to the task of discussing religious situations because of Ramsey's model-qualifier view. Normal object language is qualified to the point of infinity to express a total commitment and universal significance. Ramsey's analysis according to Tracy is helpful but Ramsey has not solved the problem of the cognitive status of religious language. Tracy thinks Ramsey is 'too sanguine' about the disclosure power of any and all traditional religious language.[75]

Ramsey's view of metaphysics is labelled 'tentative' by Tracy. Ramsey views classical proofs of the existence of God as occasions for disclosure, where we may now 'see' the presence and role of the non-observable God as supreme integrator of all experience. This does not provide an argument for the use of metaphysics to examine the cognitive claims of religious language, but Ramsey's claim is that the word 'God' can act in a disclosure in a manner described as 'theological metaphysics'. This is highly tentative, in Tracy's view.[76]

Tracy develops his theology of pluralism in directions that need not concern us here. He makes, as has been described, extensive use of both Ramsey and Lonergan, but does not really integrate them. He notes Ramsey's tentative religious metaphysics, but does not compare it with Lonergan's more robust ideas of isomorphism of human cognition and the world developed in *Insight*. Tracy uses some aspects of Lonergan's transcendental method, but does not compare it with Ramsey's approach. Tracy does note that Ramsey's and Lonergan's views of theological models are consonant, but does not engage in further discussion. Thus, while clearly aware of both Ramsey and Lonergan, Tracy does not make direct comparisons between the two.

Loughlin suggests that Ramsey has a similar idea of doctrine, as direction, rule or grammar, as Lonergan.[77] He regards both Ramsey and Lonergan as taking doctrines as 'rules for our

[73] Tracy, *Blessed Rage*, 94-100.
[74] Tracy, *Blessed Rage*, 121-3.
[75] Tracy, *Blessed Rage*, 123.
[76] Tracy, *Blessed Rage*, 150-1.
[77] G. Loughlin, 'The Basis and Authority of Doctrine', in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine*, ed. C. Gunton (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), 41-64, 54-5.

talking'.[78] Doctrines are the stage directions for the church's performance of the Gospel in this view. Loughlin notes that Lindbeck follows Lonergan in taking Athanasius as regarding the doctrine of the Council of Nicaea as a second order rule for Christian speech.[79] 'The Greek councils mark the beginning of a movement to employ systematic meaning in church doctrine'.[80] Thus, for Athanasius, the creed is a grammar.[81] Accepting a doctrine indicates agreement to speak in a certain way.

For Ramsey, the early Trinitarian and Christological controversies settled rules for our talking; the early fathers did not discover super-scientific theories of God or obtain special knowledge of heavenly happenings.[82] Loughlin suggests that Ramsey understands Nicene doctrine in a similar way to Lindberg and Lonergan. For Ramsey the word 'substance' is a logical qualifier for a more basic model; it maintains the logically necessary connection between 'God' and 'Jesus' while permitting the use of the father-son model as well. Both inform the way the story of Jesus is told and used.[83]

Loughlin notes that the view of doctrine expressed by Lonergan and Ramsey is not uncontested. Doctrines can be understood as second order propositions referring to other doctrines, but can also be understood as first order propositions referring to worldly entities and divine mysteries. Lindbeck argues that when a doctrine is interpreted as a first order proposition the statement no longer functions as a 'church doctrine'. The doctrinal character is determined by its grammatical use, an agreement to 'speak in a certain way'.[84]

For Ramsey, the Athanasian Creed commends a new symbol for 'God' as the Christian key word. It formulates rules for its construction and use. Creeds are used in worship, and it is in the context of worship that the appropriate disclosure can best be acquired. Thus, in Ramsey's thought the words used, the grammar of religious language, is there to provide a disclosure to the worshipper. Religious grammar is not just to formulate correct speaking. There is something beyond that which cannot be described or articulated, but experienced.[85]

Lonergan holds a slightly different view. Doctrine was once given, admittedly in a context, to the church as a truth. The church has held to that truth throughout the ages while expressing it

[78] Loughlin, 'Basis and Authority', 55.
[79] G. A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age*, (London: SPCK, 2009), 94; Loughlin, 'Basis and Authority', 54.
[80] Lonergan, *Method*, 286.
[81] B. J. F. Lonergan, *The Triune God: Doctrines*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 195; Lonergan, *Method*, 286.
[82] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 173.
[83] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 159-60; Loughlin, 'Basis and Authority', 55.
[84] Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 80.
[85] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 179.

in different contexts. This re-expression is undertaken in order to proclaim the gospel in different times and cultures. 'What permanently is true is the meaning of the dogma in the context in which it was defined'.[86] Dogmas are expressions of revealed truths.

Despite these issues, Loughlin views Ramsey and Lonergan as having the same sort of rules-based interpretation of doctrine, or at least the doctrine of Nicaea. Perhaps a danger with viewing doctrine as grammar is that we start to view doctrines as living in a world of their own, subject to nothing but theological plate spinning. Any doctrinal grammar has, somewhere, to touch an objective reality. If a doctrine and its grammar are secondary to the church's performance of the Christian story, then that story has to have some basis in reality, that is, in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

As we shall see below, in terms of the doctrine of the atonement (Chapter 6), Lonergan ultimately searches for an overarching viewpoint. He finds one in the outlines of the discussion of the crucifixion and related matters in Scripture, but cannot draw them into one view. He suggests that Scripture gives hints to a divine plan. Ramsey, on the other hand, is more sceptical that we can really say anything too definitive about how the atonement 'works'. We can give a variety of descriptions, based in models and metaphors. We can even consider which model is the best, in that it captures most of the data. But the models must co-exist and correct each other, restraining discourse and development in unhelpful directions.

Thus we see that despite the similarities of their positions indicated by Loughlin, there are differences between Ramsey and Lonergan. These revolve around the nature of the reference of language. Both would affirm that language has extra-linguistic reference. The difference is in how religious language refers. Lonergan thinks that doctrines ultimately refer to revealed truths, the deposit of faith guarded by the church. Ramsey tends more to the opinion that doctrines really only guard us from saying silly or heretical things about God. He is unsure that we can be definitive about any theological statement. Their approach to doctrine can seem to be very different, and this difference may indicate a somewhat different attitude to a given doctrine, or doctrine as a whole. Further, the fact that Ramsey was an Anglican and Lonergan a Roman Catholic places them in rather different locations to start with.

Macquarrie has a number of references in his works to both Ramsey and Lonergan, but does not seem to have compared the two.[87] Ramsey's work is outlined in a chapter on 'Logical Empiricism' and Lonergan in one on 'The Fourth Phase' in *Twentieth Century Religious*

[86] Lonergan, *Method*, 303.
[87] J. Macquarrie, *God-Talk. An Examination of the Language and Logic of Theology*, (London: SCM Press, 1967); J. Macquarrie, 'Word and Idea', *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 1, 2 (1970), 65-76.

Thought.[88] Macquarrie is sympathetic to Ramsey's quest for a broader empiricism, and views this as deriving from Ramsey's relationship with the thinking of Locke.[89] Ramsey, like Locke, is prepared to admit experience of 'inner' sense alongside sense data.

Macquarrie sees Lonergan's work as being an exploration of the mental act along the lines of Hegel.[90] Lonergan sees the mental act as dynamic, his notion of 'transcendence' supplies the dynamic element. For Lonergan, transcendence is the matter of raising further questions. The quest for meaning is existential, according to Macquarrie, not just intellectual.

It can be seen that Macquarrie, by uniting the idea of Ramsey's broader empiricism and Lonergan's human self-transcendence could have found a way of marrying at least these aspects of the writers' work. After all, Lonergan referred to the four stages of cognitive process as being the data of consciousness, and as the empirical basis for his cognitional theory. That Macquarrie did not pursue this resonance between Ramsey and Lonergan is, perhaps, a shame.

Hebblethwaite, in his discussion of Ramsey's understanding of the traditional proofs of the existence of God, mentions the work of Lonergan.[91] Ramsey, Hebblethwaite suggests, does not manage to spell out a framework to connect piecemeal arguments and insights. Ramsey, Hebblethwaite says does not make the case for a personalist interpretation of the universe. In fact, Ramsey sets out his case for a personalist metaphysics elsewhere.[92] Hebblethwaite introduces Lonergan as 'another writer who develops a whole new metaphysics out of an analysis of human insight'.[93] However, even after over 700 pages of concentrated argument in *Insight*, Hebblethwaite concludes Lonergan has still not established the objectivity of the transcendent.[94]

Hebblethwaite notes that Ramsey does not use the logical peculiarity of 'I' as a starting point for an empirical chastened metaphysics, but only as an analogy for a cosmic disclosure.

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[88] J. Macquarrie, *Twentieth-Century Religious Thought*, 5th ed., (London: SCM, 2001), 312-3, 379-80.
[89] Macquarrie, *God-Talk*, 232. Ramsey would, I think, accept such a relationship in his thinking. Macquarrie quotes from Ramsey's introduction to Ramsey, ed., *John Locke: The Reasonableness of Christianity with a Discourse of Miracles and Part of a Third Letter Concerning Toleration*, 20; I. T. Ramsey, 'Facts and Disclosures', in *Christian Empiricism*, ed. J. H. Gill (1974), 159 - 176, 171-2.
[90] Macquarrie, 'Word and Idea', 71. The work of Hegel is *The Phenomenology of Mind*.
[91] B. Hebblethwaite, 'The Philosophical Theology of I. T. Ramsey: Some Further Reflections', *Theology* 76, 642 (1973), 638-645.
[92] I. T. Ramsey et al., 'Models and Mystery: A Discussion', *Theoria to Theory* 1, 3 (1967), 250 - 269, 266. Ramsey refers to I. T. Ramsey, 'On the Possibility and Purpose of a Metaphysical Theology', in *Prospect for Metaphysics: Essays of Metaphysical Exploration*, ed. I. T. Ramsey (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1961), 153 - 177; I. T. Ramsey, 'Biology and Personality: Some Philosophical Reflections', in *Biology and Personality*, ed. I. T. Ramsey (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965), 174 - 206; Ramsey, 'A Personal God'.
[93] Hebblethwaite, 'Philosophical Theology', 641.
[94] Lonergan, *Insight*.

Ramsey does not pursue human self-understanding to discern a transcendent God. At least, Hebblethwaite comments, Lonergan is trying to build a case for theism, rather than hoping that the disclosure of human self-transcendence will trigger off a disclosure of divine world-transcendence.

We have reviewed the work in which Lonergan's and Ramsey's ideas have been mentioned together. There is little direct comparison between the two, although the suggestions of Beirne and Loughlin are helpful and will be used in what follows.

1.6 Thesis Structure

This chapter has aimed to introduce the theologians under discussion and to provide outlines of their work, as it pertains to this project. We have also briefly considered the sources of thought which they may have in common, and other work which has included both authors. The conclusion of this section is that there has been little attempt at a comparison and synthesis of their ideas, although the relevance of each to the other has been occasionally noted.

The thesis takes a thematic approach. We have noted that both Lonergan and Ramsey view scientific method and thought as a clear example of human cognitive process. Chapter 2 outlines their thinking on scientific method and compares them. This gives the basis for Chapter 3 which describes and compares their cognitive processes. We find that the central hypothesis, that these processes are complementary, is valid.

Chapter 4 moves on to a discussion of language. Here, we find that our authors' views diverge, as we have hinted above (Section 1.5.2), but they are not incompatible. We derive a 'hybrid' language model which incorporates elements from both. The divergence of view as to whether we can exhaustively describe anything has consequences for theological method, which is discussed in Chapter 5. Lonergan is well known for having proposed a method explicitly; Ramsey's theological method, we shall argue, is implicit but consistent. The differences in method, if not in outcome are, we suggest, indicative of the different views of language and doctrine outlined.

To examine the implications of the differences between the two writers, Chapter 6 is a theological case study, examining the views of Ramsey and Lonergan on the doctrine of the atonement. Chapter 7 aims to describe a more comprehensive theological method than either Lonergan's or Ramsey's. This hybrid model includes but generalises Lonergan's method and permits both Ramsey's approach and Lonergan's actual means of doing theology (as described

in Section 6.2) to be accommodated. It also emphasises that theology and its method are more dynamic that Lonergan's formal theological method suggests.

Chapter 8 serves as a conclusion to the work. It summarises the arguments of the thesis in terms of the comparison of Lonergan and Ramsey, and the outcome of a hybrid theological method. As no thesis can offer a comprehensive survey of one author, let alone two, further work is suggested for comparisons on topics which have been neglected here, such as ethics, ecclesiology and socio-economic theology.

1.7 Summary

It is possible to see the thesis as a whole as an investigation of the need for theological method, and the elements of such a method, if one exists. We have two thinkers who, in some areas, are very similar. Both Ramsey and Lonergan take the ideas and concepts of modern natural science and scientific method very seriously. Both argue that, in some sense at least, science gives us a paradigm for how humans think things through. Neither is prepared to concede that scientific method is the only way in which we can attain knowledge, however.

Given the importance attached to the paradigm of scientific method, it is somewhat of a surprise that, while Lonergan outlines a theological method, Ramsey appears to see no need for such. In part, we can see this difference as ecclesiological. Lonergan saw himself as a rather conservative professor of dogmatic theology.[95] Ramsey, while ordained into the Church of England, was an academic until he was called to be Bishop of Durham. For Lonergan, dogmas are permanent in their meaning, although the statements of dogma have meaning only in a given historical context. Ramsey adopts a perhaps freer approach, although it is unlikely that he would have been appointed a bishop (or chair of the Church Doctrine Commission) if his conclusions had been considered unorthodox.

[95] Lonergan, *Method*, 308.

2 Lonergan and Ramsey on Science

2.1 Introduction

Both Lonergan and Ramsey regard mathematical and scientific reasoning as being exact, clear and relatively uncluttered examples of human intentional cognition. They both readily acknowledge that science (by which they tend to mean mathematics and the physical sciences, particularly physics) is not the only way of knowing. Lonergan spends at least two chapters of *Insight* discussing common sense, which is another form of knowing.[1] Ramsey tells stories about many situations, including a law court and arrangements of loaves of bread.[2] Again, this is gaining understanding, but not scientific knowledge. Both discuss the social sciences; social scientists can gain knowledge but it is not scientific knowledge in quite the same sense as, say, physics.

Lonergan spends the first five chapters of *Insight* discussing insights available from modern science. His aim is not for the reader to necessarily grasp the scientific concepts outlined, but to experience the obtaining of an insight. Thus, the insights Lonergan discusses are incidental and may be substituted by the reader for others from their experience.[3] Ramsey too multiplied his stories in the hope that a disclosure would be revealed.[4] They regard science as the most likely route for the reader to obtain understanding of cognitive process.

One of the arguments presented in this thesis is that Lonergan's and Ramsey's cognitive processes complement each other. This will be made clear in Chapter 3, but as both are clarified by discussions of science, expositions of the authors' views on science will provide a basis for the comparison. We submit that neither view of science (or, indeed, cognitive process) is complete; the other view can be used to present an improved understanding of the subject.

A second reason for the discussion of science in particular is that the main theme of the thesis is theological method. Given that both authors understand science as giving a clear picture of human cognitional process, we can suggest that the theological method they expound or use is, in part, derived from their views of scientific method. Here, too, science and its method underpins, or at least explicates, their theological methods.

[1] Lonergan, *Insight*, 196-269.
[2] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 19-20, 24.
[3] Lonergan, *Insight*, 55.
[4] Beirne, *Logic of Disclosures*, 107.

Therefore we start our comparison of Ramsey's and Lonergan's thought with science, the place where Lonergan started. There is, however, a complexity, in that the terms used in their discussions, and hence here, are defined properly by reference to their cognitive processes. The discussion of what exactly is meant by 'insight' and 'disclosure', among other terms, is deferred to Chapter 3.

2.2 Lonergan on Science

Lonergan argued that the Greek conception of science and modern science are different. Aristotle formulated science as true, certain knowledge of causal necessity.[5] Modern science is not true, but on the way to truth. Greek science split the world into the necessary and contingent, and thus split the human mind between science and opinion, theory and practice. For modern science no such split occurs. Experiment is the fruit of theory and theory is oriented to experiment.[6] Experiments produce data; theory constrains the laws that explain data. Lonergan regards science as having 'struggled for centuries' against the crippling negation of autonomy imposed by Aristotelianism.[7] Lonergan envisages science as having shifted from logic to method, and suggests a similar shift in theology, although the latter is more in continuity with the past than scientific specialisation.[8]

Lonergan thinks that there are two components in science, and they perform a scissors action on a given problem. Firstly, there is the data and fitting a curve to it. We grasp a smooth curve from scattered elements, and create an unknown function, *f(x, y, z, …)*, for which we can write down and solve differential equations. This process increases the generalisation and is solvable 'by adding suitable assumptions and restrictions'.[9] Secondly there are general considerations from the form of a differential equation for the specific problem in hand. The solution of the set of equations will yield a possible law.[10]

Lonergan uses as his example fluid motion which yields a partial differential equation:

$$\frac{\partial(ru)}{\partial x}+\frac{\partial(rv)}{\partial y}+\frac{\partial(rw)}{\partial z}=-\frac{\partial r}{\partial t}$$

[5] Aristotle, 'Posterior Analytics', in *The Complete Works of Aristotle, the Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. J. Barnes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 114-166, II.11 94a20-95a9.
[6] Lonergan, 'Dimensions of Meaning', 238-9.
[7] B. J. F. Lonergan, 'Aquinas Today: Tradition and Innovation', in *A Third Collection*, ed. R. M. Doran and J. D. Dadosky (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2017), 34-51, 40.
[8] Lonergan, 'Aquinas Today', 44.
[9] Lonergan, *Insight*, 61-3.
[10] B. J. F. Lonergan, *Topics in Education: The Cincinnati Lectures of 1959 on the Philosophy of Education*, (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1993), 138.

Here, *u*, *v*, and *w* are the velocity components and *r* the density. Lonergan says that by restricting the motion to one dimension and assuming an incompressible and homogenous fluid, the equation simplifies.[11] This is correct but he fails to note that this is creating a model of the fluid and seems to think that the result is still exactly valid.

Scientific method is a matter of this higher guidance from differential equations and 'pedestrian' techniques of curve fitting and measurement. By analogy, Lonergan thinks that historical sciences also have a higher level control, and this is a component of historical method which could be defined.[12] There is a higher level hermeneutic control.[13]

Hefling notes that Lonergan uses his approach in Chapter 20 of *Insight*, where he defines the solution to the problem of evil in thirty one properties. These define the constraints of the problem, the 'differential equation'. The solution is in empirical fact, the specification of the solution in the incarnation and continuing church.[14] Lonergan uses the analogy of the upper blade (as in a pair of scissors) in physics for similar activity in theology.

Davis objects that these constraints are not independently determined in theology, although they are in physics. The heuristic structure Lonergan sketches is the set of beliefs he started with. Davis sees this as Roman Catholic apologetics, not religious research.[15] To some extent Davis is right, although his claims about the independence of derivation in physics might be overstated. Lonergan does capture a way of doing physics although he ignores the role of models.

Lonergan deduces six 'canons of empirical method' which characterise the group of operations known as science. The canon of selection confines the inquirer to the data of sensible experience. The canon of operations aimed at acquiring insights via both mathematical and experimental activity. The canon of relevance aims at the immanent intelligibility of data, not in applying results. The canon of parsimony states that only laws verified in the data may be added to the data of experience; there is no free form hypothesis making. The canon of

[11] Lonergan, *Insight*, 63.
[12] Lonergan, 'Isomorphism', 130.
[13] C. S. Boly, *The Road to Lonergan's Method in Theology: The Ordering of Theological Ideas*, (Lanham, Md: University Press of America, 1991), 70.
[14] C. C. Hefling, 'On Understanding Salvation History', in *Lonergan's Hermeneutics: Its Development and Application*, ed. S. E. McEvenue and B. F. Meyer (Washington D. C.: Catholic University of America, 1989), 221-75.
[15] C. Davis, 'Response to Hefling', in *Lonergan's Hermeneutics: Its Development and Application*, ed. S. E. McEvenue and B. F. Meyer (Washington D. C.: Catholic University of America, 1989), 276-88, 281.

complete explanation indicates that science aims at explaining all data. The canon of statistical residues suggests that not all data is explained via classical laws.[16]

Lonergan regards science as dynamic; it has not arrived at a goal but is on the way. The answer to the question 'what is science?' is the set of canons, the rules that guide what scientists do. The canons of empirical method express what scientists do in terms of Lonergan's analysis of knowledge.[17] Lonergan is concerned with why science is done this way. He wishes to unify the methodology to exhibit the nature of insight.[18]

2.2.1 Method

Lonergan succinctly gives his basis for scientific method:

> … experiment yields new data, new observations, new description that may or may not confirm the hypothesis that is being tested... The wheel of method not only turns but also rolls along…. New discoveries are added to old. New hypotheses and theories express not only new insights but all that was valid in the old to give method its cumulative character and to engender the conviction that, however remote may still be the goal of complete explanation of all phenomena, at least we are now nearer to it than we were.[19]

Method, for Lonergan, 'is a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results'.[20] The modern natural sciences are an excellent example of a method. It is not a set of rules to be blindly followed, but a prior, normative pattern of operations. The operations are not strictly logical, but include experiment and verification.

We have seen that Lonergan was a Thomist (Section 1.5.1), and he believes that modern science and Thomism are perfectly compatible. It is insufficient to just argue that both arise from the same human mind, as philosophies do arise which are incompatible with science. Lonergan thinks that the specific aspect of the human mind under which the two arise is understanding.[21] Scientific understanding is a process of experiment, hypothesis and verification. This method squares with Thomist potency, form and act. Lonergan argues that science has to relinquish its 'traditional naïve realism' and grapple with philosophic issues as science finds that its goal is being.[22]

Lonergan is interested in using the understanding of scientific method as a basis for understanding method in social sciences as well as theology. His argument for this is that

[16] Lonergan, *Insight*, 93-4.
[17] B. J. F. Lonergan, *Understanding and Being: An Introduction and Companion to Insight: The Halifax Lectures*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 81.
[18] Lonergan, *Insight*, 94.
[19] Lonergan, *Method*, 9.
[20] Lonergan, *Method*, 8.
[21] Lonergan, 'Isomorphism', 139.
[22] Lonergan, 'Isomorphism', 140.

human cognitive activity is common to all disciplines and posits a 'generalised empirical method' or 'transcendental method' aimed at overcoming the fragmentation of knowledge and giving a scientific basis to theology.[23] The generalised method can then be specified for a particular subject, such as theology.

Hesse notes that Lonergan's method of natural science shares assumed characteristics with other cognitive enterprises. Method is dynamic, recursive, self-corrective and cumulative, aiming towards a goal of complete explanation. She argues that while Lonergan recognises that the results of science cannot claim to be final truth, he ignores the problem that philosophy of science no longer assumes that science gives better approximations to truth. According to Kuhn, science proceeds by postulating conceptually different models of the world. Further, the natural sciences are not autonomous with respect to other disciplines.[24]

This last point can be conceded, but does not damage Lonergan's use of scientific method as a paradigm for cognitive process. All cognition is, at least in part, a response to the environment, including the environment of philosophy historically present when the thought was undertaken. Modern scientific method has, with developments, been extremely successful for two hundred years or more. The questions science attempts to answer may well be the product of historical or philosophical contexts. Nuclear weapons may not have been developed so quickly without the exigencies of World War Two, but this does not affect the science.

Hesse's claim that Lonergan ignores philosophic issues around the idea of scientific progress is correct, but in this he follows many philosophers of science as well as many scientists themselves.[25] While Euclidian space-time is very different to Minkowskian space-time, and that is different to space-time as conceived by General Relativity, the latter two are reducible to the former under certain conditions. Perhaps it is better to regard the former theories as sublated by the latter, rather than being radically replaced. However many more disparate theories might occur in the physics of space-time, they will still have to account for balls dropping and planets orbiting. Science contains a variety of theories for the same phenomena, and scientists use the theory appropriate for the current problem.

Lonergan conceives method in both science and theology as being a set of operations, done intelligently, aiming towards both a local goal and an overall quest for truth. A scientist can

[23] V. Danna, 'The Development of Bernard Lonergan's Notion of Science', *Lonergan Workshop* 22 (2011), 65-92, 69. Lonergan, *Method*, 17-22.
[24] M. Hesse, 'Lonergan and Method in the Natural Sciences', in *Looking at Lonergan's Method*, ed. P. Corcoran (Dublin: Talbot Press, 1975), 59 - 72, 62. T. S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2012 [1962]).
[25] For example Polkinghorne, *Belief in God in an Age of Science*, 44-5.

work on fluid dynamics or a theologian on the incarnation. The subject matter is different, but the basic cognitive functions and operations are similar. According to Lonergan a scientific method can be spelt out. Lonergan proceeds to a theological method by analogy.

2.2.2 Models

Lonergan argues that contemporary science proceeds without imaginable elements. Relativity, he suggests, removed the space and time in which the imaginable elements resided. Quantum mechanics removed the relevance of the images of waves, particles or continuous processes. Scientists still experiment, form hypotheses and verify them, but knowledge is no longer taking a look. The imagined can only be verified by seeing, and the objects and mechanisms of science cannot in general be seen. Science gives approximations to truth. It gives general affirmations on which particular observations converge with increasing accuracy.[26]

Miller draws a distinction between visualisation and visualisability. Visualisation is an act that depends on cognition; this does not apply on the atomic level as we cannot intuit what goes on there. Visualisability concerns the intrinsic properties of elementary particles. Here, mathematics is the key. However, we can, using Feynman diagrams, visualise the mathematics of quantum mechanics. The diagram represents subatomic particles; they have ontological content.[27] Visual representations have been transformed by scientific advance, and have themselves transformed theories. Lonergan's claim that science must be imageless seems to need nuancing.[28]

The phantasm, image or model in Lonergan's cognitive process tends to drop away once the insight and concept are formed. Thus, in his example of the definition of a circle, he starts with a cartwheel. The wheel is then abstracted. The rim becomes an infinitesimally thin line; the spokes become lines and are multiplied. The hub becomes a point with no extension, just position. This, Lonergan states, is unimaginable. We grasp the meaning of 'circle' as an abstract definition.[29] 'To understand circularity is to grasp by intellect a necessary nexus between imagined equal radii and imagined uniform curvature.'[30]

[26] Lonergan, *Insight*, 449-50.
[27] A. I. Miller, 'Imagery and Representation in Twentieth-Century Physics', in *The Cambridge History of Science: Volume 5: The Modern Physical and Mathematical Sciences*, ed. M. J. Nye (Cambridge: CUP, 2003), 191-215, 204-5, 208.
[28] Miller, 'Imagery and Representation', 212-3.
[29] Lonergan, *Insight*, 31-3.
[30] Lonergan, *Verbum*, 42.

In common with some other philosophers of science, Lonergan tends to downgrade models in favour of mathematical expression.[31] His process pivots between a concrete situation, the abstraction of it, and then back to the concrete for validation and application to further concrete problems. Thus Archimedes' problem concerned the material of a crown, and his solution was to weigh it in water. The abstract formulations are the principles of displacement and specific gravity. The experience – the phantasm, the diagram, the model, do not appear in the abstract formulations.[32]

Models, for Lonergan, 'purport to be, not descriptions of reality, not hypotheses about reality, but simply interlocking sets of terms and conditions.'[33] They stand to theology as mathematics to the natural sciences. They may direct our attention in a given direction and either provide a basic sketch of what we find or prove irrelevant, in which case they may aid in uncovering what may be overlooked. Models facilitate description and communication, providing an adequate language to describe complex known reality.

Lonergan accepts a role for models in the human sciences, but regards mathematics as assuming that role in the natural sciences. In this he seems inconsistent. A physicist, for example, has to translate from a mathematical result back to a reality. The mathematics, without such an interpretation, is meaningless. The interpretation is usually expressed in terms of the original models and the approximations required that render it tractable.

Lonergan does not seem to appreciate the use and power of models in science, nor in theology. He is a more propositional thinker. While he recognises that models help us be articulate about something complex, he seems to think that mathematics, in science, will produce correct solutions. What the parallel to this might be in theology is unclear, although it is possible that the traditional dogmas of the church take this role as the 'upper blade' in Lonergan's thinking.

2.2.3 Conclusion

Lonergan uses science as an analogy for theology. He views a differential equation in physics as setting the conditions for a solution to a specific problem, and propositions about God as having a similar role in theology. As science has a definable method, so theology should have. The basis of this analogy is that both science and theology (along with other subjects) are based in human cognitional process. While the subject matter is different, Lonergan's generalised empirical method can be specialised to fit both.

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[31] R. B. Braithwaite, *Scientific Explanation: A Study of the Function of Theory, Probability and Law in Science*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1953), 93-6.
[32] Lonergan, *Insight*, 30.
[33] Lonergan, *Method*, 266-7.

Lonergan tends to focus more on propositions than on models. He does not seem to grasp the use and utility of models in science, and this affects the way he sees models in theology. He is aware of the need to verify the outcome of calculations in physics, but not that this is partly because solutions of differential equations require approximations. We suggest that Lonergan's understanding of science is flawed in this respect and that this failure to grasp the use of models is also reflected in his theological method.

2.3 Ramsey on Science

Ramsey frames his approach to science, in part, apologetically. Logical positivism viewed empirical and logical statements alone as cognitively meaningful. Thus Ramsey, working within an empirical frame, responds to defend the meaningfulness of non-scientific knowledge. Science and religion are different, but have similarities.[34]

For Ramsey, science and religion give different accounts of the same event. He imagines a team of scientists present at the miracle at Cana (John 2:1-11). A miracle is both a sign and a wonder; the activity of God is seen; events do not conform to normal. The scientists, however, find such non-conformity the life-blood of discovery. After much investigation they provide a satisfactory explanation of event in terms of some generalization of fermentation. Ramsey argues that they have discovered God's general activity in and through the total universe. The miracle gives the concept of God's personal activity. Only when the scientific enterprise comes to an end, when there are no surprises left in the universe, would there be no more incidents which give rise to two interpretations in terms of God.[35]

Ramsey asks if a scientist need be religious. He suggests three answers. The first is that religion is bound to disappear in a scientific age. The second that science and religion are two different and distinct activities; thus a scientist can be religious if they choose so to be. The third view, the one Ramsey wishes to advocate, is that science and religion have distinctive features, so cannot be homogenised as in his first alternative, but that they need encompassing in a single view. Science and religion can be harmonized.[36]

The critical question for Ramsey in the synthesis of science and religion is whether experimental verification of hypothetical deductions constitutes such a distinctive feature of scientific method that the two are completely diverse and incompatible. He believes that

[34] Gill, *Ramsey*, 109.
[35] I. T. Ramsey, *Our Understanding of Prayer*, (London: SPCK, 1971), 19.
[36] Ramsey, *Religion and Science*, 4-5.

science and religion are kin, and the starting point of his argument is the part played in science by intuition or 'disclosures'.[37]

2.3.1 Method

For Ramsey, science starts with observations of things in relation to us, for example water boiling. The scientist then formulates simple generalisations. Different experiments will give diverse results but the scientist seeks an invariant – 'water boils at one hundred degrees Centigrade.' Ramsey notes that the generalisation goes beyond the facts, and that the appeal to experimental error safeguards the simple generalisation grounded in the disclosure occurring around the experiments.[38]

The simple generalisations are then developed. For example, water boils at one hundred degrees Centigrade at a given pressure. These generalisations can then be verified. Given we can deduce a function of boiling point against pressure from our results, we can verify it by, say, boiling water on a mountain top or in a deep cave.[39]

The next step is to form large scale hypotheses. For example, Newton unified various observations relating to gravity into a single theory. The observations turn out to have features in common hitherto unnoticed. There is scientific 'insight'. At issue is the status of the invariants with which scientists name disclosures, such as 'particle'.[40] Ramsey maintains that scientific and personal disclosures are similar.[41]

Scientists in practice, Ramsey states, behave as if the key words of a theory are more than labels or jingles. They are linked to a metaphysical background, whether or not that background is still current. For example Newton's laws have a background of absolute time and space. The laws remain, although time and space are no longer absolute. Scientific advance takes us closer to a full insight into the universe.[42]

The status of scientific invariants, Ramsey claims, is ambiguous. They may have a more than mathematical interpretation. Scientific method requires some sort of metaphysics. A scientist cannot give a scientific account of themselves in 'object' terms. Scientific method includes the scientist as an active subject.[43]

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[37] Ramsey, *Religion and Science*, 6.
[38] Ramsey, 'Religion and Science: Philosopher's Approach', 144-5.
[39] Ramsey, 'Religion and Science: Philosopher's Approach', 145-6.
[40] Beirne, *Logic of Disclosures*, 45; Gill, *Ramsey*, 110.
[41] Ramsey, *Religion and Science*, 13-23.
[42] Ramsey, 'Religion and Science: Philosopher's Approach', 149.
[43] Ramsey, 'Religion and Science: Philosopher's Approach', 150-1.

Ramsey argues that scientific hypotheses may be modified or converted but are not 'knock-down falsified.' Old theories are still useful. This seems to lead to increasing fragmentation, as hypothesis is added to hypothesis to attempt to get nearer the truth. Yet science does not give up its vision of one theory of the universe.[44]

For Ramsey, words in science are entailed by scientific assertions, but the key words are not native to scientific language. Key assertions do not entail verifiable deductions. 'I exist' might be entailed by a variety of observations, but it does not entail any particular assertion. By analogy Ramsey asserts that a similar thing can be stated about 'God exists'.[45]

Ramsey has two points. Firstly that while religion and science are kin there is a logical difference between the behaviour of their words, and secondly that they can be united using clues derived from the behaviour of 'I'. Science and theology may find a synthesis in their methods, but Ramsey argues that a scientist can only find a single language map when they become religious, and a theologian can only do so when they become scientific.[46] Religion gives to science the vision of the single map science seeks; science then must accept having theological categories that elude empirical verification. Science gives to theology the broad empirical relevance it needs; theology, however, must then accept its language as tentative.[47]

Ramsey concludes by reflecting that Berkeley argues that we see God as we see persons. To see a person is to see hair, skin, face, and so on, but to see a person is to see more than this. We see the universe and all its parts. By and through them we see God.[48] The scientist and the theologian discover logical patterns in this divine visual language as best they can.[49]

Ramsey interprets Berkeley in his own terms. Our own activity shows ourselves in self-disclosure. If we survey the variety of the universe and catalyse our thinking with self-disclosure, a cosmic disclosure may occur. The activity of God discloses itself to us through the universe.[50] Berkeley appeals to a cosmic disclosure which may occur after, or parallel to, a self-disclosure. The world comes alive in a cosmic disclosure around the 'ideas' of the Universe, and give us a notion of God.[51]

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[44] Ramsey, 'Religion and Science: Philosopher's Approach', 151-4.
[45] Ramsey, 'Religion and Science: Philosopher's Approach', 156. Ramsey, *Religion and Science*, 74.
[46] Ramsey, 'Religion and Science: Philosopher's Approach', 157.
[47] Ramsey, *Religion and Science*, 83-4.
[48] G. Berkeley, 'Alciphron or the Minute Philosopher', in *The Works of George Berkeley*, ed. A. C. Fraser (London: Continuum, 2005 [1732]; 2), 1 - 368, Dialog 4, section 5. K. P. Winkler, 'Berkeley and the Doctrine of Signs', in *The Cambridge Compaion to Berkeley*, ed. K. P. Winkler (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), 125-165, 139-40.
[49] Ramsey, *Religion and Science*, 86-7.
[50] Ramsey, 'Berkeley', 22.
[51] Ramsey, 'Berkeley', 23.

Ramsey's argument following Berkeley is a version of the cosmological argument, *a posteriori* from effect to hypothesised cause. As such it is open to criticisms of that argument. Scientists, as Ramsey is well aware, do not need to take the step of recognising the personality of the universe, nor the person behind it.[52] Ramsey can only commend the phrase 'Creator God' as the result of a cosmic disclosure.

On the other hand there is no scientific reason for Ramsey not to take the step he does. Ramsey has argued that the subject, the scientist, stands outside scientific method. Science has no purchase on religion and theology, as the latter have no specific hold over science. The move from the invariants of science to God is not forced; Ramsey can only commend it. Not everyone will have a cosmic disclosure; it can happen to us.

2.3.2 Models

A further strand of Ramsey's apologetics is the role of models in both science and theology. He believes that academic disciplines can be brought together by consideration of how they use models, and that this is often either overlooked or misunderstood. A model, Ramsey contends, is the manner in which a discipline provides its understanding of a mystery and the ultimate mystery confronts all disciplines.[53]

Ramsey differentiates models in physics. Ramsey follows Black in his characterisation of models as scale (or picturing) and disclosure (or analogous).[54] In the nineteenth century models were mechanical, picturing models. Thus to understand the motion of light waves, a 'luminiferous ether' was modelled as a medium for transmission. This was a mechanical model, yielding an elasticity and the velocity of light. An analogue model has an isomorphism to the phenomena it represents, but it is not a replica. Science, Ramsey argues, is concerned with these latter models.[55]

Following Apostel, Ramsey gives three characteristic uses of scientific disclosure models. First, they enable a mathematical treatment of phenomena. The phenomenal structure is reflected in the model which permits useful mathematical expression. Secondly, the model permits simplification of complex or insoluble mathematics. Thirdly, models become proxies for topics that elude our view, being too small, or too far away, for example.[56]

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[52] Ramsey, *Religion and Science*, 72.
[53] Ramsey, *Models and Mystery*, 1.
[54] Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 221.
[55] Ramsey, *Models and Mystery*, 10-11.
[56] Ramsey, *Models and Mystery*, 11-2. L. Apostel, 'Towards the Formal Study of Models in the Non-Formal Sciences', in *The Concept and the Role of the Model in Mathematics and Natural and Social Sciences*, ed. B. H. Kazemier and D. Vuysje (Holland: D Reidel, 1961), 1-37.

According to Ramsey 'The great virtue of a model is that it enables us to be articulate when before we were tongue tied'.[57] The articulation is necessarily more tentative than using a scale model, and some prefer to subordinate the model to the mathematical and deductive theory with which it is associated.[58] For Ramsey, however, the question is now 'how can we be reliably articulate?'

The discourse a disclosure model enables is reliable scientifically when structurally the model echoes the phenomena, and so the universe authenticates it. Secondly, a model is better the more deductions open to verification and falsification it makes.[59] The model has a reference in the phenomena, and involves an ontological commitment arising from a disclosure. The model provides an understanding of what the disclosure discloses. It stands as a 'bridge' between theory and observation.[60]

More recent work on models agrees with Ramsey's view. Models are seen as mediators between theory and observation. They are autonomous in construction and function and work as instruments for investigating the world, representing some aspect of it, or some aspect of theory, or both. We learn by building and manipulating models; in Ramsey's terms, they make us articulate where we were not before.[61]

Ramsey moves from models in science to models in theology, noting that in the latter discipline the models are also builders of discourse, as in the multiple phenomena around Jesus described in Acts 2:22 and 3:14-5. Here Jesus is described as 'a man attested to by God', 'the Holy and Righteous One', 'the Author of life'. These are diverse phenomena, united, Ramsey suggests, by models such as 'Messiah' and 'Logos' which can enable the emergence of reliable and consistent doctrinal discourse.[62] They also enable us to make sense of the complex logical structure which inhibits articulateness, and to talk about what eludes us. For Ramsey theological models enable our discourse. Further, they enable reliable understanding, by chiming in with the phenomena, and thus being grounded in a disclosure. Secondly, theological models are not verifiable in the same way as scientific models. The success of a theological model depends on its harmonizing power, what Ramsey calls its empirical fit.[63]

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[57] Ramsey, *Models and Mystery*, 13.
[58] Ramsey cites as an example Braithwaite, *Scientific Explanation*.
[59] Ramsey, *Models and Mystery*, 13-4.
[60] Ramsey, *Models and Mystery*, 13, 20.
[61] M. S. Morgan and M. Morrison, 'Models as Mediating Instruments', in *Models as Mediators: Perspectives on Natural and Social Science*, ed. M. S. Morgan and M. Morrison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 10 - 37, 10-2.
[62] Ramsey, *Models and Mystery*, 14.
[63] Ramsey, *Models and Mystery*, 15-7.

Dunbar thinks that Ramsey has two problems. Firstly, he is in danger of making too close a parallel between science and religion. Just because both have problems or mysteries does not mean that these are identical. Secondly, scientific phenomena are concerned with the world, while religious phenomena seem to be concerned with ways of looking at the world. If the difference is just between points of view or disclosures, then Ramsey does not have an adequate account of Christian faith. [64]

Ramsey concedes that science and religion are different. He writes that personal situations, apparently different from scientific ones, have scientific echoes.[65] We suggest that Ramsey means that science and religion arise from the same cognitive processes, a point which can be reinforced from Lonergan's thought. Ramsey does not think science and religion are that closely parallel; their mysteries and phenomena are different, but united by being processed though human cognition.

While we might accuse Ramsey of being too sanguine about the analogy between scientific models and their theological cousins, he does examine the use of models in the social sciences, and notes that two types of models are required to describe complex situations. Social sciences are both art and science, Ramsey suggests, and need both scientific inanimate models and social animated ones. The models of social and political institutions, say, will point to the mysteriousness of the institutions, the irreducible 'I' as a logical peculiar in social studies.[66] Dunbar's second point is answered here: according to Ramsey, in science, social science and theology, the 'I' is present. It is not just another point of view. The scientist is involved in the universe.

Metaphors, Ramsey argues, are like models in that they enable us to be articulate. We use them when words would otherwise fail us.[67] The model is perhaps a sustained metaphor. If metaphors are not decoration or ornaments of language, then usually models are not 'epiphenomena of research'.[68] Ramsey argues that they are rooted in disclosures and born in insight. A metaphor is a 'transaction between contexts',[69] but they are more than that for Ramsey, they are grounded in inspiration. Metaphor and model, therefore, are more than just combining two situations. They enable us to be articulate about mystery, although they cannot

[64] S. Dunbar, 'Empiricism and the Nature of Religious Claims: Some Reflections on Ian T. Ramsey's Approach to Philosophy of Religion', *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 5, 4 (1976), 391-403, 399, 401.
[65] Ramsey, *Religion and Science*, 15.
[66] Ramsey, *Models and Mystery*, 40-1.
[67] E. H. Hutten, 'The Rôle of Models in Physics', *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 4, 16 (1954), 284-301, 289.
[68] Ramsey, *Models and Mystery*, 50; Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 236.
[69] I. A. Richards, *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, (New York: OUP, 1965 [1936]), 94.

exhaust it.[70] Ramsey argues that all disciplines have characteristic models and metaphors. Disclosure arises from appreciation of the logic of the language they use. Insight needs understanding to avoid blind enthusiasm, but understanding alone is hollow.[71]

In most subjects the neglect of underlying models and metaphors causes little immediate harm as the discourse can always be verified by either experimental verification or empirical fit. The model is tied to observable facts. With theology, however, things are more difficult, as the disclosure is around a set of events which take on cosmic significance. The model is 'self-appointed' and we have to decide which inferences from it are reliable. We need to acknowledge a group of cosmic disclosures and their models; God is what is revealed when we see the point of various metaphors.[72]

2.3.3 Conclusion

Like Lonergan, Ramsey was trained in mathematics, but he seems to have had, at least in his writings, a wider interest in physical science than Lonergan. He regards scientific hypotheses as being the language of science, and that science always seeks greater inclusiveness of facts.[73] Scientific language is limited by its permanent incompleteness and selectivity. It cannot give total coverage of all facts as concretely given.[74]

This view of science and language explains Ramsey's view of mathematics within science. Mathematics is a part of scientific language, that part which is used to predict outcomes. Scientific language creates models and these models allow us to be articulate. Mathematics allows us to manipulate and make predictions, but is not the whole of science and its results.

For Ramsey, then, models are crucial in science, and are not wholly mathematical. This enables him to follow the use of models in other disciplines, particularly psychology and the social sciences.[75] He then can argue that the metaphors and models we use in theology work in a similar sort of way. A model is never the thing described, for if it were it would no longer be a model. A model is a partial description of some aspects of the original. Thus a metaphor for God is not a full description of God any more than the Bohr model of the hydrogen atom is a full description of that.

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[70] Ramsey, *Models and Mystery*, 53.
[71] Ramsey, *Models and Mystery*, 55-6.
[72] Ramsey, *Models and Mystery*, 58-9.
[73] I. T. Ramsey, 'Miracles: An Exercise in Logical Mapwork', in *The Miracles and the Resurrection*, ed. I. T. Ramsey (London: SPCK, 1964), 1 - 30, 5.
[74] Ramsey, 'Miracles', 6-7.
[75] Ramsey, *Models and Mystery*, 22-46.

2.4 Lonergan and Ramsey on Science

It can be argued that both Ramsey and Lonergan privilege science and scientific discourse over other forms of knowledge and its acquisition. In his approach to cognitional structure, Lonergan is accused of preferring theory to common sense, intellect to feeling, insight to its linguistic expression and the permanent achievements of the past to the new developments of the present.[76] His dialectic promotes progress when spontaneous desires and common sense submit to intelligent desire. This, McKinney argues, is foundationalist philosophizing; a postmodern philosopher would argue that the two principles should be equal.

Ramsey, too, can be accused of giving pride of place to scientific language.[77] Following to some degree the later Wittgenstein and developing linguistic analysis in a cognitive direction, he attempts to show that experience cannot be collapsed in to the measurable and verifiable. However, in doing so, Ramsey uses the comparison of scientific models and religious metaphors. A disclosure model is an analogue model with existential depth.[78] Exactly what this dimension of transcendence is, Ramsey does not say. Ferré argues that Ramsey asserts that disclosures have objective reference, he does not defend it.[79] Ramsey seems to be making an analogy between scientific models, which do refer to objects, and theological models.

Stiver notes that demands for clear and decisive verification procedures for language to be meaningful reflect the influence of logical positivism. For the later Wittgenstein validation of truth claims is rooted in communal agreement.[80] Ramsey does not stress either the linguistic or the scientific community, and hence his account of science is lacking. Lonergan does note the role of the scientific community, and of belief and trust within that community. Scientific collaboration for Lonergan is a system of checks and balances to avoid mistakes.[81]

Ramsey does focus upon science and thus can be accused of privileging scientific discourse. However, he does cover much more than science in his work and does not seem to think that scientific and common sense experience and activity are very different. Scientific and other disclosures bear echoes of each other. A disclosure around a photograph of someone and one

[76] R. H. McKinney, 'Lonergan and the Ambiguity of Postmodern Laughter', in *In Deference to the Other: Lonergan and Contemporary Continental Thought*, ed. J. Kanaris and M. J. Doorley (Albany: State University of New York, 2004), 141-64, 155; R. H. McKinney, 'Deconstructing Lonergan', *International Philosophical Quarterly* 31 (1991), 81-93.
[77] D. R. Stiver, *The Philosophy of Religious Language: Sign, Symbol and Story*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 86.
[78] Stiver, *Philosophy of Religious Language*, 75-7.
[79] F. Ferré, *Language, Logic and God*, (London: Collins, 1970 [1962]), 200.
[80] Stiver, *Philosophy of Religious Language*, 77.
[81] Lonergan, *Insight*, 733-5.

around the atomic theory bear some resemblance.[82] We can also note that given Ramsey's aim of responding to logical positivism, he is in fact attempting to argue that scientific language and other languages are not that dissimilar.

Marsh argues that Lonergan's philosophy avoids strong foundationalism and contains post-modern elements.[83] McKinney agrees, but argues that there are other postmodern philosophies that are as legitimate as Lonergan's. Lonergan does have a concern for examining and negating hierarchies of thought in his process of dialectic and of reversing counter-positions.[84]

While Ramsey and Lonergan have been accused of privileging science and its discourse over other subjects and their sublanguages, it is not the case that they do. Both take the view that science, at least in its empiricist form, misses out a lot of human experience and discourse. In fact, it would seem that both Lonergan and Ramsey were at pains to try to correct the empiricist and logical positivist privileging of science.

2.4.1 Method and Models

Both Ramsey and Lonergan make acceptable attempts to define the scientific method. They start with experience and move through understanding to a judgement of understanding's correctness in verification. For both understanding is mathematical in nature. Ramsey emphasises the function of models, while Lonergan describes the use of mathematics, particularly differential equations, as more important.

Lonergan		**Ramsey**	
Data		Data	
Mathematics		Generalisation	
	Solution via approximation		Model
Verification		Hypothesis	
		Verification	

Table 2.1: Comparison of Ramsey and Lonergan's Scientific Method

Lonergan, we have seen, claims that modern physics transcends imagination, and can only link sets of pointer readings with other future sets.[85] Ramsey disagrees and argues that models are what make us able to hold scientific discourse. My experience of physics is that Ramsey is correct.[86] Most physics is done using models; verification is mostly done to establish the

[82] Ramsey, *Religion and Science*, 16-22.
[83] J. Marsh, 'Reply to Mckinney on Lonergan: A Deconstruction', *International Philosophical Quarterly* 31 (1991), 97-8.
[84] Lonergan, *Insight*, 268-9, 413. Lonergan, *Method*, 235-8.
[85] Lonergan, 'Isomorphism', 138.
[86] I have a first degree and PhD in physics and co-authored 25 papers.

models and approximations used are adequate. Much interest in physics lies in regions where the approximations and models are thought to break down.

In Lonergan's fluid dynamics equation, for example, we know that no real fluid is incompressible. The model fluid used to solve the equation does not in this sense represent reality accurately. Verification, therefore, is needed to establish how well the model represents reality. In many situations, the approximation is adequate. In some the compression of the fluid is important and the degree of importance is established by the divergence of experiment and the model's predictions. The model is still used, and does not drop away as Lonergan seems to suggest. The approximations used to make the equation tractable remain and the model needs to be borne in mind while examining the solutions. Lonergan seems not to recognise this explicitly, at least.

Lonergan's view of science, therefore, needs augmenting by Ramsey's sensitivity to the use of models. Once this aspect is added to Lonergan's scientific method, there is little to choose between the two accounts. Ramsey's use of models and Lonergan's lack thereof does have implications for their understanding of language and theological method. Lonergan does not seem to grasp that human models and metaphors of, for example, the redemption, cannot be complete.

According to Ramsey's definition, a model is something that makes us articulate when before we were not. We suggest that scientific method is such a model. Scientific method is not doing science, but a map or model of how science can be done. We have seen that Polkinghorne argues that all descriptions of scientific method are incomplete, and Polanyi agrees in that we know more than we can tell. Any description of scientific method is therefore a model of how science is done, not a prescription of how to do it. We propose that this applies to all methods in all disciplines. In theology, therefore, a theological method is a model of how theology might be done. It is not exhaustive or prescriptive, nor is discussing it doing theology. The method exists to enable us to be articulate about how we do theology.

2.4.2 Conclusion

Lonergan and Ramsey both provide reasonable accounts of modern scientific method which, while perhaps couched in language a scientist may not be comfortable with, they would be able to agree with. Ramsey emphasises the ongoing role of models in scientific discourse, while Lonergan focusses more on the development of concepts and the mathematical side of scientific development. In this Ramsey is probably closer in portraying how science is done

than Lonergan. Models are not abandoned in science when a mathematical representation of the phenomena is derived. The model remains and is used to understand and interpret what the mathematics means. Further, representations are not abandoned either. While quantum mechanical processes are unimaginable, nevertheless representations of them are used in calculation. Physics, at least, does not rely entirely on mathematics; there has to be interpretation from the equations to physical meanings.

Both Ramsey and Lonergan regard scientific method as being a key exemplar of human cognitive process. It is not the only way, for them, of obtaining knowledge or exploring the world around us, but it is perhaps the clearest and cleanest way of observing human cognition in action. Both authors would admit that this is not the only way in which cognition takes place. Lonergan explicitly situates it in 'intentional' cognition, that is, thinking about something. Ramsey notes that disclosure only occurs in some particular situations. Occasionally both Ramsey and Lonergan might be accused of at least privileging science over other modes of cognitive process, but it is a charge of which they can be found innocent.

Finally, we have noted that a description of a method is a model and makes us articulate in discussing how the subject is undertaken. In terms of our hybrid language model (Section 4.4), the method, as a model, links the levels of Theory and Interiority. This combines Polkinghorne's point that a method is always incomplete and Polanyi's that we know more than we can tell. With a method we can discuss how we approach a discipline.

3 Cognitive Process

3.1 Introduction

Both Lonergan, explicitly, and Ramsey, more implicitly, use modern science, particularly physics, as the exemplar of their cognitive process. By 'cognition' here both Ramsey and Lonergan refer not just to thought and inference, although these are part of cognition, but to sensations, perceptions and responses. By some standards this is a more 'modern' definition of cognition.[1]

Both Lonergan and Ramsey argue that the cognitive process includes moments of intuition, where the learner says 'I've got it'[2] or 'the penny drops'.[3] For both authors the intuition occurs after some experience and is part of the process of coming to understand. Neither believes that science is the only subject to think about, or in which we can come to understand something. As we have seen, Ramsey views thinking in theology (and other subjects) as running parallel to the way of thinking of science. Lonergan argues that most thinking is in fact done in the mode of common sense, and devotes two chapters of *Insight* to the subject. We shall describe some of his results in Section 3.2.4.

Lonergan describes his view of cognitive process in some detail, and we shall start with a description of it. Ramsey's discussion is much less detailed; he seems to have expected his auditors and readers to 'catch on' by the use of many examples. The argument of this chapter is that their processes complement each other and are sufficiently similar to be conflated.

3.2 Lonergan on Cognitive Process

Lonergan describes his cognitional process in several places, and it is key to understanding the rest of his thought.[4] While *Insight* is the central resource for grasping the cognitive process, it is written from a 'moving viewpoint' and thus, to some extent, it is not the most useful resource in summarizing it.[5]

Lonergan's understanding of intentional cognitive activity is fairly simply stated. Initially we have some experience. The experience asks us a question for intelligence: what is it? We ponder this and arrive at an insight. This is the 'aha!' moment. Lonergan uses Archimedes'

[1] B. C. Smith, 'Cognition', in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, ed. T. Honderich (Oxford: OUP, 2005), 145-6, 145.
[2] Lonergan, 'Insight Revisited', 225.
[3] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 24.
[4] E.g. Lonergan, *Method*, Chapter 1. Lonergan, *Insight*. Lonergan, 'Cognitional Structure'.
[5] Lonergan, *Insight*, 20.

experience in a bath as his paradigmatic example.[6] This is not the end of Lonergan's process, however. Insights, he says, are 'a dime a dozen'.[7] What matters is whether they are correct or not. The insight thus asks a second question: is it so? This is the question for judgment and it can be answered yes, no or possibly.

The first five chapters of *Insight* describe various processes of coming to know in mathematics and science, as we have seen. Lonergan's point is not the specific content of the chapters. The reader is invited to substitute 'helpful experience of his own'.[8] The aim of *Insight* is not only to describe the cognitive process, but to assist the reader is appropriating it for themselves. There is thus a two-fold movement. The reader is expected to understand how understanding is obtained, and to identify the process of understanding in themselves.

Lonergan's slogan for *Insight* is:

> Thoroughly understand what it is to understand, and not only will you understand the broad lines of all there is to be understood but also you will possess a fixed base, an invariant pattern, opening upon all further developments of understanding.[9]

This has been criticised for being both vague and too sweeping. What does 'the broad lines of all that is to be understood' mean, for example? Understanding of understanding does not give the outline of special relativity.[10] If Lonergan means the form of our understanding then his point seems to be that the structure of human knowledge is derived from our mind and thus has no guarantee of contact with reality.[11] Mathews responds that Lonergan's program is related to the view that the central task of philosophy is the unification of knowledge, and that questioning and understanding are common activities across the disciplines.[12] Understanding types of questions and acts of understanding will ground a knowledge of the broad features of the disciplines.

Lonergan argues that his cognitive process is invariant. Any revision to it will require some act of experience, understanding or judgment.[13] Thus an attempt to revise the broad structure will, at the same time, affirm that structure. Any revision to the scheme is incidental, but, it has been observed, even an incidental revision to the abstract scheme may have consequences in

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[6] Lonergan, *Insight*, 27-31.
[7] B. J. F. Lonergan, 'Theories of Inquiry: Responses to a Symposium', in *A Second Collection*, ed. R. M. Doran and J. D. Dadosky (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2016), 31-8, 34. Lonergan, *Method*, 16.
[8] Lonergan, *Insight*, 55.
[9] Lonergan, *Insight*, 22.
[10] P. J. McGrath, 'Knowledge, Understanding and Reality - Some Questions Concerning Lonergan's Philosophy', in *Looking at Lonergan's Method*, ed. P. Corcoran (Dublin: Talbot Press, 1975), 27 - 41, 27.
[11] McGrath, 'Knowledge, Understanding and Reality', 28-9.
[12] W. Mathews, 'Lonergan's Awake: A Reply to Fergus Kerr', *New Blackfriars* 57, 668 (1976), 11-21, 13.
[13] Lonergan, *Insight*, 359-60.

relation to human knowing.[14] However, we note that while Lonergan's scheme has been extended, it has not been revised in this sense. The criticism is perhaps apt, but has not been found to apply to Lonergan's process, yet, at least.

Further criticisms of Lonergan's cognitive process suggest that he has failed to analyse the concepts of knowing, understanding and insight.[15] For Mathews this conceptual analysis is to study concepts of understanding without relating them to the experience.[16] *Insight* is an experimental study of human understanding. But Lonergan, according to Kerr, floats between philosophy and psychology and his analysis is quasi-scientific. Wittgenstein's point was that the domination of modern thought by science distorts the mind's view of itself, and Kerr claims that Lonergan falls into this trap.[17]

It is perhaps fairest to conclude here that, as Kerr suggests, the basic problem is that Lonergan and Mathew's understanding of the nature of philosophy is different from that of Kerr and McGrath. Lonergan propounds philosophical theories of knowledge, while Wittgenstein suggests a practice of linguistic analysis.[18] Perhaps there is no real way of bridging the divide.

Lonergan argues that his approach answers three basic questions: What am I doing when I am knowing? Why is doing that knowing? What do I know when I do it? The answer to the first question is a cognitional theory; to the second, an epistemology; to the third a metaphysics.[19]

There are objections to Lonergan's use of 'knowing' in these questions. We do not go and 'do some knowing' and so Lonergan's first question, at least, is regarded as garbled. We do not do knowing as we do walking. Lonergan assumes that knowing and understanding are activities which we can examine.[20] Mathews observes that perhaps the best approach to the question is to start from the activity of questioning. Questioning promotes coming to know, and that is something that we do. Knowing, in the sense meant by Lonergan, is answering questions. Thus the question is not non-sensical.[21] It should be admitted, however, that the way Lonergan states the question is grammatically ugly.

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[14] C. Davis, 'Lonergan and the Teaching Church', in *Foundations of Theology*, ed. P. McShane (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1970), 60-75, 72.
[15] McGrath, 'Knowledge, Understanding and Reality', 33.
[16] Mathews, 'Lonergan's Awake', 11.
[17] F. Kerr, 'Beyond Lonergan's Method: A Response to William Mathews', *New Blackfriars* 57, 669 (1976), 59-71, 63-4.
[18] Kerr, 'Beyond Lonergan's Method', 63.
[19] Lonergan, *Method*, 27.
[20] T. R. Miles, 'Review of 'Insight'', *Mind* LXX, 277 (1961), 113 -114, 114; McGrath, 'Knowledge, Understanding and Reality', 37-8.
[21] Mathews, 'Lonergan's Awake', 13.

Bahnsen objects that Lonergan's idea of a structure of cognitional process is based on a misleading view of 'mental substance', and that his account of cognition is vulnerable, as we do not have access to the mental operations of others. By claiming that his cognitional process is general, Lonergan is arguing from the outward acts of those engaged in intelligent thought. His cognitional process is based on an argument from silence or, worse, from a fallacy of false cause. Further, Bahnsen objects that we can all find people who are not at all interested in understanding anything.[22]

Mathews observes that *Insight* is 'a highly experimental study of the human performance of understanding and knowing'.[23] The goal of the first part of *Insight* is the self-affirmation of the knower. The relevant conditioned is 'I am a knower', and the affirmation of this is for each individual to achieve or not.[24] We do not have access to the mental operations of others, as Bahnsen observes. We cannot make others try to understand their own understanding, but there is testimony from people other than Lonergan that they have self-affirmed as knowers. Lonergan can only invite others to explore their cognitional process, he cannot assume their processes are as his description, but this is not fatal to Lonergan's project.

Bahnsen's other complaint is that Lonergan develops his cognitive theory and epistemology 'under the pretence of neutrality'.[25] In fact, Lonergan adopts his epistemology and methodology for a reason and that reason is the proof of Thomism and its associated theism. The ideas of potency, form and act are not introduced in *Insight* until Chapter 15, and their relation to Thomist thought is not made explicit for a page or two.[26] This does not make Lonergan's view on cognition incorrect, of course, but the reader innocent of Thomism may well feel ambushed.

Lonergan's argument is that there exists a necessary isomorphism between our knowing and its proportionate known.[27] 'Act' denotes what is known that we affirm; 'Form' denotes what is known as what we understand; 'Potency' denotes what is known as we experience. Thus the levels of Lonergan's cognitive process are found to be the elements of metaphysics. Bahnsen is quite correct; Lonergan has arrived at Thomist metaphysics under the pretence of neutrality.

This criticism, apt as it may be, does not show Lonergan's cognitive process to be incorrect. Thomist metaphysics, after all, has not been disproved over the centuries. Bahnsen's

[22] G. L. Bahnsen, 'Method in Theology', *The Westminster Theological Journal* 36, 1 (1973), 96-101, 99-100.
[23] Mathews, 'Lonergan's Awake', 11.
[24] Lonergan, *Insight*, 352.
[25] Bahnsen, 'Method in Theology', 99.
[26] Lonergan, *Insight*, 459.
[27] Lonergan, *Insight*, 510-1.

complaint is, perhaps, a warning that Lonergan develops his process with his end point in mind, and it is to the details of the process we now turn.

3.2.1 Cognitive Process

Lonergan develops his view of cognitive process over the first half of *Insight*. He proceeds by example, starting with arithmetic and then through various examples of physics and common sense. Insight begins with the conscious desire to understand.[28] This desire is part of being human. Being is the objective of this pure desire to know, and the desire to know is the inquiring and critical spirit.[29] Without this desire to know, we are content with the flow of inner and outer experience. We fail to understand, to know.

3.2.1.1 Experience

The cognitive process starts with experience. We can see the text of a book. This is meaningless without further steps. Printed text is simply marks on a page without understanding. Knowing begins with experience, either from the senses or of consciousness, but it cannot stop there. Knowing is more than taking a look.[30]

For Lonergan, knowing is more than just taking a look at the 'already out there now real'. The object looked at here is a 'body' accessible to all animals. For Lonergan, the real is the verified, that which is the end of the cognitive process. We experience, we ask the question 'what is it?' We answer with an insight and generalise it to a concept. We then ask 'is it so?' If it is, then we have verified the concept and arrived at the real, something we know, a part of being.[31]

Experience, for Lonergan, is raw data, but not just data from the senses. Lonergan includes 'data of consciousness'. This is self-awareness, or self-presence. The data of consciousness is what is gained by paying attention to our conscious operations.[32] Sense data and data of consciousness are not knowledge, but constitute a beginning of knowledge.

3.2.1.2 Understanding

Lonergan asserts that the questions for the intelligence which arise from experience are of the type 'what is it?' An insight occurs when we 'get it'. Intelligence patterns multiple things into an intelligible whole. Obtaining an insight is personal. The teacher cannot teach the insight; they can only set the conditions for the student obtaining it, and subsequently point out the

[28] Miller, *Quest for God*, 28.
[29] Lonergan, *Insight*, 372.
[30] Miller, *Quest for God*, 29.
[31] Lonergan, *Insight*, 276-7.
[32] Miller, *Quest for God*, 48-9; Lonergan, *Method*, 13.

consequences of the insight in terms of generalising it into a concept and making a judgment on its truth.[33]

In an insight 'You see it, you know, you have caught on to something'.[34] But the insight is into a single case. It is not a general formulation of the problem. There is a sometimes difficult next step, that of forming the concept. The concept includes the original insight into a concrete problem, but goes beyond it. We grasp the nature of this particular circle in an insight. Then we can abstract and generalise it, creating a concept. The insight might express a circle as a locus of points equidistant from a centre, but that would also be (approximately) true for the coastline of Africa, with the centre at the centre of the Earth. The definition of the circle has to be more precise: a locus of coplanar points equidistant from a centre.[35] Abstraction is not an impoverishment of the real, but enrichment, a grasp of what is important and relevant as important and relevant. If we start with a cartwheel, what is important to the definition of the circle are the hub, the circumference and the radii.[36] The material of the wheel and its colour are irrelevant and belong to the 'empirical residue'.[37]

Understanding grasps what a thing is in its external and internal relations. Complete understanding is obtained by understanding all things in all their relations; this is only enjoyed by God. Only God has the unrestricted act of understanding of being, and being is the content of the unrestricted act of understanding.[38] There is nothing left to be understood, no further questions to be asked. The unrestricted act of understanding understands itself.[39] In a lengthy argument, Lonergan suggests that our idea of the concept of the unrestricted act of understanding implies that it is the same thing to understand what being is and what God is.[40] We can form the notion of what God is from our knowledge of being.

For Lonergan the real is being and apart from being there is nothing. He arrives at the conclusion that if the real is completely intelligible, God exists. But the real is completely intelligible. Therefore God exists.[41] Being is completely intelligible, and the real is being. The real is an object of thought and affirmation, and so the real is completely intelligible.[42]

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[33] Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*, 205.
[34] Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*, 36.
[35] Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*, 42.
[36] Liddy, *Startling Strangeness: Reading Lonergan's Insight*, 85.
[37] Lonergan, *Insight*, 50-5.
[38] Lonergan, *Insight*, 667.
[39] Lonergan, *Insight*, 671.
[40] Lonergan, *Insight*, 680-92.
[41] Lonergan, *Insight*, 695.
[42] Lonergan, *Insight*, 696-7.

The idea that complete understanding belongs only to God does not mean that we cannot understand anything. What can be known by us Lonergan terms 'proportionate being'. Proportionate being is what 'is to be known by experience, intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation'.[43] The step of reasonable affirmation is undertaken in judgment.

3.2.1.3 Judgment

Empiricists might believe that knowledge is the product of the senses. Idealists might suppose that the senses are deceptive and the real world is known by reason or intuition. Empiricism focusses on Lonergan's level of experience; idealism on that of understanding. For Lonergan, however, there is a further step. We have to judge whether our insights and concepts are correct. They are simply ideas and ideas are often wrong.[44] We must judge our understanding of experience.

Sufficiency of evidence grounds the judgment.[45] The activity of judgment is thus akin to verification in the sciences. Understanding grasps possibilities in sensible data. Scientific hypotheses require verification.[46] A scientific explanation, Lonergan says, is a theory verified in instances. As verified, it refers to act; as theory it refers to form; as instances it refers to potency.[47] Relevant data may be overlooked, and so the verified hypothesis is open to revision. While the example is from scientific method, Lonergan does not limit his cognitive process to science. All intentional cognition follows this pattern.

The question for judgment is 'is it so?' If we grasp that the evidence is sufficient to make a positive judgment, we grasp the prospective judgment as 'virtually unconditioned', that is, a conditional statement with the conditions fulfilled. Judgment transforms a prospective to a virtually unconditioned judgment. We may answer 'yes', 'no', 'probably' or note that there is insufficient evidence. The answer to the question for judgment relies on two sets of data: the present situation and previous insights we remember. We compare the current item under question to previous affirmations and reach a decision.[48]

3.2.1.4 Decision

Lonergan does not focus on the level of decision in *Insight*, although it is there at least by implication in Chapter 18, 'The Possibility of Ethics'.[49] It comes to the fore in *Method*. The level of decision sublates the previous three and is the level of freedom and responsibility. It is the

[43] Lonergan, *Insight*, 456-7.
[44] Miller, *Quest for God*, 51.
[45] Miller, *Quest for God*, 53.
[46] Lonergan, 'Isomorphism', 140.
[47] Lonergan, *Insight*, 458.
[48] Lonergan, *Insight*, 306-8.
[49] Lonergan, *Insight*, 618-56.

level at which we have found out that we have to decide what we are to make of ourselves. We make ourselves as authentic human beings, or not.[50]

For Lonergan, decisions are part of creating meanings for the individual and community.[51] Meaning is a constitutive and controlling element in human action.[52] We move, act and decide in a world organised by meaning and by making decisions we can change that world. Social and cultural institutions are the product of meanings, and can change, as the meanings that establish them change.[53] Common meanings enable a community. Insofar as they are understood, the community flourishes; if people get out of touch, common meaning contracts.[54]

We move from judgment to decision by asking a question: What should I do? A person deliberates and decides on a course of action, and this fits with the individual's judgments of fact and value. The decision is not forced; there is a great degree of freedom expressed in making it. We grow in our discernment of values and become more free, less of a slave to immediate satisfaction and apparent goods. We mature into fully alive, authentic human people. This authenticity is, of course an ideal, but it is a helpful ideal. Miller observes that the acceleration due to the Earth's gravity is 9.8 ms^{-2} but nothing accelerates at precisely this value. 9.8 ms^{-2} is an ideal, but a useful one. Similarly, perfect authenticity is an ideal, but a helpful one.[55]

We can make good or bad decisions, and no one is perfect. Our decisions are influenced by our society and our previous decisions. Our biases, whether personal or from society, can persuade us to make less good decisions (see Section 3.2.4). Progress is not simply the product of human decisions but requires divine grace as well. The reversal of decline also needs grace and self-sacrificing love (see Section 3.2.4.5). The individual's aim is to aim for authenticity, to promote progress in self and society through the decisions that they make.

3.2.2 Levels of Conscious Intentionality

Parallel and related to the cognitive process are the levels of conscious intentionality. The main operation at the empirical level is experience. At the level of intelligence it is understanding. At the level of rationality it is judgment. At the level of responsibility it is decision. The levels are sometimes referred to as that of the operation, and each main

[50] Lonergan, *Method*, 117.
[51] Lonergan, *Method*, 72.
[52] Lonergan, *Method*, 169.
[53] Lonergan, *Method*, 76.
[54] Lonergan, *Method*, 167.
[55] Miller, *Quest for God*, 58-63.

operation has a number of sub-operations.[56] Thus the empirical level has experience as its main operation, and sensing, perceiving, imagining, feeling, speaking and moving as sub-operations.[57]

In the cognitive process the operations relate to each other as the subsequent sublating or transcending the former. Thus experience is sublated by understanding. It is absorbed into understanding, not changed by it. The levels of cognitive intentionality work in a similar way. The move from one to another 'expands' consciousness.[58]

Lonergan condenses his cognitional process into a transcendental method. This has four precepts, linked to each level of consciousness: Be attentive; Be intelligent; Be reasonable; Be responsible.[59] They have an existence prior to any intentional thinking, based in the dynamics of human consciousness. This transcendental method is relevant to theology, Lonergan claims, because theology is the work of human minds. While there is a special method relevant to each discipline, such as physics or mathematics this is grounded on the operations of the human mind.[60]

Lonergan's method has been criticised for a variety of reasons. Directly relevant here is the accusation that his methodological theology is so generic that it fits every science.[61] This is in a sense perfectly correct. Lonergan bases his theological method on the general transcendent method he derives paradigmatically from science and other areas of human thought. Meynell responds that applying a general method to theology is harmless and necessary. A critical theology, capable of answering any relevant question, needs to have a dimension of generality. To argue for the most basic presuppositions of religion can only be done by appeal to general principles of rational belief and reasonable assent.[62]

3.2.3 Subjectivity and Objectivity

We shall see below (Section 3.3.2.1) that a major point of criticism of Ramsey's work comes about because he finds it difficult to convince his readers that a disclosure to an individual can be anything except subjective. Ramsey has little response to the criticism, for example, that a disclosure of God could simply be a hallucination. Lonergan has views on how we move from a

[56] Miller, *Quest for God*, 46-7.
[57] Lonergan, *Method*, 13.
[58] Miller, *Quest for God*, 47.
[59] Lonergan, *Method*, 22-3.
[60] Lonergan, *Method*, 25.
[61] K. Rahner, 'Some Critical Thoughts on 'Functional Specialties in Theology'', in *Foundations of Theology*, ed. P. McShane (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1971), 194-6, 194. W. M. Shea, 'The Stance and Task of the Foundational Theologian: Critical or Dogmatic?', *The Heythrop Journal* 17, 3 (1976), 273-292, 274.
[62] H. Meynell, *The Theology of Bernard Lonergan*, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 37-8.

subjective experience to objectivity, and these are described here as they will be useful in augmenting Ramsey's arguments (Section 3.4.2).

Lonergan believes that objectivity is the result of authentic subjectivity:

> For it is now apparent that in the world mediated by meaning and motivated by value, objectivity is simply the consequence of authentic subjectivity, of genuine attention, genuine intelligence, genuine reasonableness, genuine responsibility.[63]

By 'subject' Lonergan means a human person who is conscious. We are conscious through intentional operations. Lonergan does not mean that there is no objective truth; objective truth is found through authenticity. Authenticity is a type of person, but also an operation. We achieve authenticity through self-transcendence.[64]

The guidelines to achieve authenticity are the transcendental precepts, which derive from Lonergan's cognitive process. Life gives rise to questions, questions may have answers and these may lead to new questions. This is what Lonergan calls the 'self-correcting process of learning'. The core of this process is insight.[65] We attend, think, consider and decide. Further, we can attend to the fact that we attend, think, consider and decide, we can think about it, consider it and decide what it means for us. This is Lonergan's self-affirmation of the knower.

By 'self' Lonergan means a concrete, intelligible unity-identity-whole. 'Self-affirmation' means that the self both affirms and is affirmed. 'Self-affirmation of the knower' then means that the self is affirmed as characterised by the operations Lonergan describes in his cognitive process.[66] Lonergan wishes to grasp the unconditioned 'I am a knower if I am a concrete and intelligible unity-identity-whole, characterised by acts of sensing, perceiving, imagining, inquiring, understanding, formulating, reflecting, grasping the unconditioned and judging.'[67] The fulfilment of these conditions is given in consciousness. Lonergan, therefore, has to clarify what he means by consciousness.

Consciousness for Lonergan is not an inward look. A widespread concept of knowing is 'taking a look', and consciousness, by analogy, is taking an inward look. For Lonergan, however, consciousness is a factor in knowing and knowing has the problem of objectivity annexed to it. For the moment, Lonergan focusses on an account of consciousness and defining the knower. By consciousness Lonergan means an awareness immanent in a cognitional act. We affirm that cognitional process is a succession of acts as well as content. Thus hearing is both a response

[63] Lonergan, *Method*, 248.
[64] Lonergan, *Method*, 99. Miller, *Quest for God*, 62-3.
[65] Miller, *Quest for God*, 32-3.
[66] Lonergan, *Insight*, 343.
[67] Lonergan, *Insight*, 343-4.

to a sound and becoming aware of sound. There is content and conscious (but not necessarily deliberate) act. Not all conscious acts are cognitional acts. In a cognitional act we go beyond simple awareness.[68]

Lonergan differentiates consciousness into empirical, intelligent and rational. Empirical consciousness is characteristic of sensing, perceiving and imagining. Intelligent consciousness is characterised by striving for intelligibility and exhibits operating intelligently. Rational consciousness is at the level of grasp on the unconditioned, reflection and judgment. Further, Lonergan argues that while there are different kinds of cognitive contents, and there are also different kinds of cognitional acts, the contents cumulate into unities, on the side of the object, and the acts cumulate into a subjective unity. Conscious acts are not random but coalesce into a single knowing.[69]

Having clarified consciousness, Lonergan asks the question 'Am I a knower?' This is a question for reflection, and has to be answered by each individual. The answer 'yes' is coherent; the answer 'no' is not. A hedging answer will not do either: 'I do not know if I am a knower' implies that I know that I do not know, and hence I am a knower. If I am not a knower, I know nothing and silence is the only course of action open to me.[70]

For Lonergan, the notion of objectivity is found in a patterned context of judgments. We can define any *A*, *B*, *C*, *D*,… as an object, where these are themselves defined by:

A is, *B* is, *C* is, *D* is…

A is not *B*, nor *C*, nor *D*, nor…

B is not *C*, nor *D*, nor …

C is not *D* nor …

We can define any object, say *A*, as a subject where *A* affirms themselves as a knower. We can then say 'I am a knower', 'this is a computer' and make a further judgment 'I am not this computer'. We can also add more objects with further judgments, and also we can reasonably grasp and affirm objects that are also knowers and hence subjects, that is, other people.[71]

Lonergan notes that the notion of objectivity resides in a plurality of judgments of a definite pattern. Objectivity is not contained in a single judgement, or in an experience or insight.

[68] Lonergan, *Insight*, 344-5.
[69] Lonergan, *Insight*, 347-9.
[70] Lonergan, *Insight*, 352-3.
[71] Lonergan, *Insight*, 399-400.

Further, Being is what is to be known through the totality of correct judgements. A single judgement is an increment along the path of knowing Being. The subject is a part of Being, and thus starts with knowing a multiplicity of parts, adding further that one part knows others.[72]

Lonergan concedes that it is quite possible to be mistaken. Judgments of fact are either true or not. If I am correct that this object is a computer, it is merely a fact.[73] However, he identifies a number of ways in which we can be wrong. Our mental processes are not infallible and it will be useful to outline the ways they can misfire.

3.2.4 Bias

Bias, for Lonergan, is an inauthentic orientation. It is caused by and causes inauthentic actions, decisions and judgments. Lonergan identifies four biases: dramatic, individual, group and general.[74] We will briefly summarise these here and also discuss the concept of decline in Lonergan's thought. These ideas will assist in using Lonergan's cognitive process to underpin Ramsey's ideas, and also provide a basis for the discussion of the atonement later in this thesis.

3.2.4.1 Dramatic Bias

We live in a dramatic pattern of experience, but no experience is unfiltered. Often, the filter is neutral or positive, raising helpful schemes of images and feelings. But we can also flee from insight. We can prefer the darkness to the light; we cover up wrongdoing. Sinful acts harm the victim and the perpetrator, the latter by penetrating into the unconscious and forming a largely unconscious bias. The inner filter on experience, or censor, becomes oppressive. Blind spots, what Lonergan calls 'scotomas' develop. With a scotoma, an insight and questions proceeding from it are blocked. We withdraw to an inner world.[75]

3.2.4.2 Individual Bias

Egoism is a failure to ask whether our actions can be generalised and are compatible with the social good. It is intelligent to some degree but is caused by and causes an incomplete development of intelligence. We can solve our own problems but not raise further questions.[76] We can rationalise away the golden rule to treat others as we would be treated. Lonergan agrees that there can be different situations and individuals, but the egoist thinks that they are the exception to any rule in any situation they choose.

[72] Lonergan, *Insight*, 400-1.
[73] Lonergan, *Insight*, 370.
[74] Miller, *Quest for God*, 116.
[75] Miller, *Quest for God*, 117-20. Lonergan, *Insight*, 214-20.
[76] Lonergan, *Insight*, 245.

Individual bias is more conscious than dramatic bias. Egoists may try to flee their actions and deceive themselves, but they will ultimately have an uneasy conscience. There is always the desire to understand, but the egoist does not grant serious consideration to its further questions.[77]

3.2.4.3 Group Bias

A community as a whole has a common sense and each subgroup, or slightly different community, has its own form of common sense. A group bias is an aberration of the communal common sense, a loyalty to our own group and hostility to another.[78] Often, groups can function positively in society, but one group can start to manipulate society for its own good. Social classes then start to be distinguished by social success and this is to the detriment of others.[79]

Times of change often set the conditions for groups to develop bias. A change, for example, in manufacturing technology can lead to a factory closing and the workers resenting a group that has benefitted. This can be accompanied by real injustices and oppression. Group bias can be very damaging. Individual bias can be corrected by society, but group bias can be reinforced by other members of the group, and this can lead to a cycle of decline.[80]

3.2.4.4 General Bias

Common sense is a vital development for humanity, but it is not the only way of knowing. Often, however, it is viewed as such, even though there is much outside its reach. There are other ways of obtaining knowledge. Lonergan notes that often a specialist turns that speciality into a bias by failing to recognise the importance of other specialisms.[81] The tendency to do this with common sense is very strong, and leads to a lack of understanding of longer term effects. The main role of common sense is to answer pressing and practical problems. It does not attend to longer term implications.

General bias towards the short term can thus cut off academic debate and the ability of different disciplines to enrich each other. Common sense emphasises the immediate. A specialist emphasises their specialism. Neither views wider ranging subjects as relevant or practical, and can open them to ridicule and, perhaps, de-emphasise them in both popular and academic culture.[82]

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[77] Lonergan, *Insight*, 247. Miller, *Quest for God*, 120-3.
[78] Lonergan, *Method*, 52.
[79] Lonergan, *Insight*, 249.
[80] Miller, *Quest for God*, 124-5.
[81] Lonergan, *Insight*, 251.
[82] Miller, *Quest for God*, 127-8.

3.2.4.5 Decline

The accumulation of biases leads to decline. First, oversights occur, which cause inept activities. These require action which may also be inept to cover them over, and so on. This is Lonergan's notion of decline; he distinguishes two cycles thereof, a shorter and a longer.

The shorter cycle of decline is caused by group bias. A successful group will make decisions to keep and enhance its success, and forgets the wider good. The 'haves' and the 'have nots' become increasingly divided. This can be recognised by progressives who aim at correcting the dominant group's oversights and bias. However, this in turn can lead to the dominance of a new group and the need for further correction.[83]

The addition of general bias to group bias can lead to a more deep seated longer cycle of decline. Society disregards ideas for improvement and the situation declines at an accelerating rate. The bias can even be claimed to be beneficial.[84] The decline can be mistaken for progress. Culture can be banished, academic disciplines co-opted to justify society. Our ideals become more debased and so opposition to the views of society declines. We become alienated from our true selves.[85]

To overcome this cycle of decline a higher viewpoint is necessary. This is not humanly possible. It would need to dissolve blocked insight, recall banished culture, defeat totalitarianism and total war. This would require an absolutely transcendent viewpoint. For Lonergan this is present in the world through grace.[86] Decline can be reversed by self-sacrificing love. This is shown ultimately through Christ, and Christians are called too to overcome evil with good. The reversal of decline through love is an important part of Lonergan's concept of redemption.

3.2.5 Summary

We have described Lonergan's approach to intentional cognition, describing the main operations of experience, understanding and judgment. We have also discussed some of the objections to Lonergan's account of cognition and found that, overall, they do not amount to a decisive rejection of his views. We noted that Lonergan's cognitive process underpins his approach to every other subject he discusses. At this level of analysis then, science and theology follow similar cognitive track, although, of course, the subject matter and operations differ.

[83] Miller, *Quest for God*, 131-2.
[84] Miller, *Quest for God*, 133.
[85] Miller, *Quest for God*, 134-6.
[86] Miller, *Quest for God*, 137-8.

We have also considered Lonergan's views on subjectivity and objectivity and on bias and decline. These topics are firmly grounded on his cognitive analysis, and show how objectivity grows from authentic subjectivity and how our experiences and sin, our refusal to consider the longer term or other perspectives, leads us (and our society) into inauthentic situations from which only self-sacrificing love can redeem us.

Overall, Lonergan's intentional cognitive process is a systematic and convincing model of how some aspects of human thought progress. He is able to incorporate aspects of how the process might misfire as well as how we can come to objective conclusions. This comprehensiveness enables us to use Lonergan's work to enrich Ramsey's less systematic approach.

3.3 Ramsey on Cognitive Process

Ramsey is a less systematic writer than Lonergan, and his focus is more squarely on language. Nevertheless, he does espouse a human cognitive process. For Ramsey, this process is formed around the concept of an experience, a disclosure, and our subsequent change in understanding as a consequence of the disclosure. We describe Ramsey's idea of disclosure here, and then argue that Ramsey's disclosure and Lonergan's insight have significant overlap (Section 3.4).

3.3.1 Situations

Ramsey starts by asking to what sort of situation religion appeals. He takes two points from Butler.[87] First, Butler says that we are more than our public behaviour.[88] Ramsey understands this to mean that self-awareness is more than body awareness. This is the basis of religion. The characteristic claim is that there are spatio-temporal situations which are more than body awareness. This is a discernment situation.

The second point that Ramsey adopts from Butler is that 'probability is the very guide to life'.[89] Ramsey argues that Butler does not just mean that doubt and uncertainty pervade knowledge totally. For Ramsey this gives a half-hearted belief that God probably exists. People act, Butler observes, even when the probability of success is very low.[90] A non-swimmer will attempt to rescue a child drowning in a river. This, Ramsey says, is a dominating loyalty, linked to a world view. We have a total commitment, appropriate to a question of great consequence, based upon going beyond rational considerations.[91]

[87] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 14.
[88] Butler, *Analogy*, Part 1, Conclusion, 111-2.
[89] Butler, *Analogy*, Author's Introduction, xxv.
[90] Butler, *Analogy*, Author's Introduction, xxv-vi.
[91] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 16-7.

Butler is arguing against deism, and as deism assumed the existence of God, he did not need to engage in proof of the existence of God.[92] Thus, at this point, Ramsey too is assuming the existence of God. While elsewhere Ramsey does provide a proof for this, his approach to the challenge of logical empiricism is lacking in this aspect. He is, it seems, at this stage trying to establish simply that there is more than the empirical.

Dunbar accepts that some situations, such as looking at great art, bring a discovery, through beauty, of its objectivity and authority. However, he questions whether these situations should be called 'religious'. The moments might be meaningful or significant, but, while conceding that Ramsey may use the word 'religious', he is not sure that it is anything other than different people using different language.[93] Jeffner too is suspicious of Ramsey's situations, suggesting that his descriptive theory is based on a biased definition of religious language, to obtain the analysis he needs.[94] Dunbar also questions the structure of a religious situation. A disclosure does not entail a commitment. Such experiences do occur, but they do not necessarily do so.[95]

McLendon and Smith are uncertain that Ramsey's claim that religious situations are essentially characterised by disclosures or that religious language arises from or evokes such. Trivially, disclosure is a fact of life, but they cannot make sense of the claim that a total disclosure distinguishes religion and generates religious language. Further, they question whether a total disclosure refers solely to Christianity, or to some parts of it.[96] Here, McClendon and Smith seem to suppose that all religious situations give rise to a disclosure. Later, they note that Ramsey insists that the disclosure stories may not work, if the hearer does not 'get it'.[97] The religious situation does not yield a disclosure in all cases.

In Ramsey's defence we can suggest two points. Firstly, while he might unconsciously select situations to make his point, his writings encompass a wide range of situations and stories associated with them. It is a little harsh to accuse him of only discussing situations which enable his analysis. Secondly, Ramsey implicitly assumes, at least, that not everyone will respond in the same way to a situation. He adds another example in the hope that the penny will ultimately drop if the clouds do not part immediately. The example of the fisherman suggests that it is possible for someone not to 'get it'.[98] Ramsey proceeds by examples, noting

[92] G. R. Cragg, *The Church and the Age of Reason 1648-1789*, (London: Penguin, 1960), 166.
[93] Dunbar, 'Empiricism and the Nature of Religious Claims', 392-3.
[94] A. Jeffner, *The Study of Religious Language*, (London: SCM, 1972), 49.
[95] Dunbar, 'Empiricism and the Nature of Religious Claims', 393.
[96] J. W. McClendon, Jr. and J. M. Smith, 'Ian Ramsey's Model of Religious Language: A Qualified Appreciation', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 41, 3 (1973), 413-424, 417.
[97] McClendon and Smith, ' Qualified Appreciation', 419.
[98] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 21.

that no example will give the full story.[99] He has two groups, illustrating disclosures and commitments.

3.3.2 Disclosures

Ramsey's examples of disclosures suggest that a disclosure can happen in a wide variety of situations. We can obtain a disclosure about a person when they tell us their name, or about a landscape. We feel under these circumstances to have had an 'encounter', to have learnt more than mere facts.[100] Ramsey argues that these situations indicate what is meant when religious people talk about an odd 'discernment' or a 'characteristically different' situation. He says that they do not reduce religion to mere subjective experiences. There is an objective reference. All situations are subject-object in structure.[101]

Ramsey gave many examples of disclosures in different situations. Beirne counts one hundred and sixty examples over sixty publications.[102] She classifies them into seven categories, noting that six are aimed at illuminating the seventh, cosmic disclosures.[103] We will focus in Section 3.3.2.2 on cosmic disclosures, but first discuss objective reference in disclosure.

3.3.2.1 Objectivity and Subjectivity

The issue of the objective reference of a disclosure, particularly a cosmic disclosure, is an important one, and Ramsey revisited it several times. As we shall see there was a lot of criticism of his view on this point. Whether the critics were answered is a point of debate.

Much of the question over the subject – object relationship in disclosure in Ramsey's work revolves around his view of the importance of 'I'. 'I' is not described: I as the subject disclose myself to myself. Hume tried to give an account of the self and personal identity, but, Ramsey says, confessed himself to be bewildered.[104] 'If perceptions are distinct existences, they form a whole only by being connected together. But no connections among distinct existences are ever discoverable by human understanding.'[105] Ramsey suggests that within a set of distinct perceptions a self-awareness breaks in on the person. They become aware of their personal identity. The self is disclosed to the self.[106]

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[99] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 18.
[100] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 26-7.
[101] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 27-8.
[102] Beirne, *Logic of Disclosures*, 33.
[103] Beirne, *Logic of Disclosures*, 75.
[104] Ramsey, 'Biology and Personality'. D. Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, (London: Penguin, 1985), Appendix, p 675.
[105] Hume, *Treatise*, Appendix, p 677.
[106] Ramsey, 'Biology and Personality', 183.

Ramsey grants that we cannot be sure of objective transcendence as we can be of our own subjective transcendence. However, we come alive when the universe comes alive. Subject and object are matched in a cosmic disclosure. Both subject and object are disclosed as transcendent. Ramsey's 'objective reference' is grounded on facts disclosing themselves to us. They become the focus for cosmic disclosures.[107]

Nevertheless, there is a problem with objective reference in Ramsey's disclosures. Ferré suggests that he confuses 'experiencing as objective' with having experience of the objective.[108] Cohen objects that Ramsey assumes that God exists outside the 'world' and is in relation to it, otherwise his cosmic disclosures have no ontological foundation.[109] These objections are metaphysical in nature. It is hard to answer Ferré's objection as everything we experience may be just an experience of something as objective. We have to make a metaphysical assumption somewhere; Ramsey makes a personalist assumption.[110]

Dunbar is concerned that Ramsey's claim that disclosure-commitment situations are subject-object in nature does not work in the case of God.[111] The claim, Dunbar thinks, is valid for a captain's devotion to their ship, but how do we get from this to God? This is a claim by analogy and Hebblethwaite worries that the analogies in Ramsey are unsatisfactory. As we noted Hebblethwaite thinks that even Lonergan has not established objectivity of the transcendence, but Lonergan at least builds a case for theism, rather than hoping for a trigger from a problematic disclosure of human self-transcendence. [112]

Ramsey suggests that a cosmic disclosure discloses an X, and all cosmic disclosures disclose the same X. The disclosure yields a model, by which we can talk about X. A single model (or model-qualifier) yields a minimal theology. Theology thus needs many models to sustain adequate discourse. Ramsey argues that we can be reasonably sure God has disclosed himself in a given context if the X context and the God context resemble each other. Secondly, we can bring the model of God ('loving Father') alongside patterns of the universe, hoping that the isomorphism of the patterns will 'click' and God will disclose himself.

There are also empirical criteria for talking about what the cosmic disclosure discloses. Some models have a better empirical fit than others. Ramsey observes that theology is not science, and nor are many other areas of discourse. 'A loves B' has no experimentally verifiable

[107] I. T. Ramsey, *Models for Divine Activity*, (London: S.C.M. Press, 1973), 60-2.
[108] Ferré, *Language, Logic and God*, 200.
[109] C. B. Cohen, 'Some Aspects of Ian Ramsey's Empiricism', *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 3, 1 (1972), 2-17, 17.
[110] Ramsey et al., 'Models and Mystery: A Discussion', 266.
[111] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 28; Dunbar, 'Empiricism and the Nature of Religious Claims', 396.
[112] Hebblethwaite, 'Philosophical Theology', 640-1.

deductions, at least initially. While he does not state it explicitly, Ramsey seems to assume that talk about what a cosmic disclosure discloses is verified in a community which does articulate experience of different cosmic disclosures, refers to the same God who discloses himself through them, and can work out criteria for accepting some and rejecting other articulations. Ramsey does note that those who run particular models of God to death are heretics, and heresy can only really be determined by a community.[113]

A single disclosure, in Ramsey, is open to all the criticisms above: the objective reference of the disclosure is not necessarily God. Ramsey seems to have taken a more inductive approach. If theology needs many models, then the obtaining of the objective reference God will take many associated disclosures, and these will need to be mediated through a community. It is here that Lonergan's analysis of objectivity can assist Ramsey's picture (Section 3.4.2).

3.3.2.2 Cosmic Disclosures

Ramsey gives an example of a cosmic disclosure in the story told by Paley of kicking a stone on a heath, and, alternatively, kicking a watch.[114] If Paley's argument is that the world is like a watch and watches have makers, therefore the world has a maker, God, it is a poor argument indeed. However, Ramsey suggests that Paley's argument has value when it persuades us to wonder and question. In Paley's terms, kicking a stone when walking on a heath yields no problem; there is no wonder, and no question. Kicking a watch, however, invokes a question: 'why is this thus?' If watches were as common as stones, there would be no astonishment, no wonder and hence no question.

For Ramsey the important point for theology is that there are questions. We start to seek purpose where we did not before. We could view the universe as simply things knocking into each other, such as a stone and a foot. But the watch is a different case; we seek a purpose. If we take the watch as our model, then we may start to seek purpose in the universe. Paley's argument, for Ramsey, is thus that we should look at the universe as we look at the watch on the heath. We may then find connections. The ordinary can become wonderful.

Ramsey suggests that Paley was mistaken to suppose that we can speak straightforwardly of God's purpose; he did not give appropriately odd currency to the word 'God'. Purpose stories, such as the watch on the heath, can be developed in relation to the whole universe. When 'purpose' has been qualified to make it clear that 'God' and 'maker' are not synonyms, we may

[113] Ramsey et al., 'Models and Mystery: A Discussion', 265-7.
[114] W. Paley, 'An Especially Famous Design Argument', in *Philosophy of Religion: A Guide and Anthology*, ed. B. Davies (Oxford: OUP, 2000 [1836]), 253-9, 253; Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 75-7.

then experience a cosmic disclosure. We may obtain a view of the universe which is 'alive'. The penny drops. There is discernment.[115]

Broiles argues that Ramsey's claim is empty with respect to Paley's argument. If the logic of 'God exists' and 'the watchmaker exists' differ, then the negation of the expressions will be different, and 'God does not exist' would either contradict 'God exists', in which case the logic would not be peculiar, or the negation would not be the contradictory of the assertion and would hence be equally apt currency for a disclosure situation.[116] Ramsey, Broiles concludes, is focussing on the state of mind of the religious believer, not analysing the logic of religious language.

In response, Beirne suggests that Broiles missed Ramsey's point. Ramsey was saying that 'if you look at the universe in this way, you may experience a disclosure'.[117] The stories have to be developed in relation to the whole universe, and even then, a cosmic disclosure may not occur to the individual.[118] We cannot guarantee God's emergence to the individual, for that would give us power over God.

This response raises further questions. An individual who cannot see St Paul's Cathedral while standing outside it is considered blind. This can be corroborated by further tests. Hudson argues that an individual who fulfils certain criteria but fails to discern God is categorized as religiously blind to protect our belief in God from his disconfirming experience.[119]

Griffith-Dickson does not respond directly to Ramsey or the objection. However, she observes that there are dis-analogies between forming a sensory belief and a religious belief. The objection does not demolish Ramsey's argument. We can claim an analogy between rugby and swimming; the differences do not undermine their claims to be sports. Analogical language is not controlled. There is no set of criteria for how close an analogy must be before it is allowed. Thus analogy is a form of rhetoric and its success or failure is dependent on the inclination of the recipient to be convinced.[120]

Ramsey proceeds by examples. The idea seems to be that with each example the reader or hearer might catch on. Thus he suggests that if some metaphysician stated 'When you look at a daffodil it's *really* the Absolute of which you are aware', the metaphysician is opting for a

[115] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 76-7.
[116] R. D. Broiles, 'Logic and Religious Language', *Sophia* 5, 2 (1966), 10 - 14, 13-4.
[117] Beirne, *Logic of Disclosures*, 77.
[118] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 77, 79-80.
[119] W. D. Hudson, 'Discernment Situations: Some Philosophical Difficulties', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 19, 4 (1966), 434-445, 436.
[120] G. Griffith-Dickson, *Human and Divine: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religious Experience*, (London: Duckworth, 2000), 119.

map where ordinary language about daffodils is structured, its connections with other discourse shown, on a scheme which talks about the Absolute.[121] The map organises and illuminates the diversity of ordinary language. But it is a choice and has to be made by the individual.

For Ramsey a situation can lead to a disclosure of God, a cosmic disclosure. The discourse is developed in the context of the situation. Thus, Ramsey quotes extensively from Conrad's *Typhoon*, wherein, he argues, the writing is such as to encourage a disclosure. The discourse is developed in the context of wind, a gale, and is specimen discourse about spirit. By analogy, Ramsey claims, biblical writers used the winds of their own land as models for Spirit. The Sirocco winds scorch; they are painful airs. This is a start point for discourse of the Spirit of God in its power[122] contrasting with that of humans. Kindlier winds too yield disclosure. Cool winds bring refreshment. We come alive and respond to God's activity. Discourse of God is licenced in terms of breath, Spirit, personal existence.[123]

If Ramsey is correct, 'spirit' is not the name of a 'thing':

> *[D]iscourse about the Spirit is a way of being articulate about God's initiating activity and our responsive activity, and it is a way which is licensed by, as it originates in, situations where God discloses himself in occasions characterised by winds and gales.*[124]

We can speak of Jesus in terms of Spirit because of the situations people have found themselves in when they have known the revitalising effects of the wind. Jesus situations and wind situations are isomorphous.

We can certainly complain of this model and discourse of the Holy Spirit that Ramsey has depersonalised him. He thinks that Spirit is a model for God's activity, and that this is the key phrase for our doctrine of the Holy Spirit. In Ramsey's defence we can suggest that the discourses he builds around wind, gale and activity is only one set of possible discourses about the Trinity and its persons. Ramsey does ask the question 'is the Holy Spirit a person?', but prefers it phrased as 'does talk about the Holy Spirit conform to personal logic?' His answer is that not all talk about the Spirit originated in personal logic and so we should not exclude non-personal language. We should, he claims, be logically flexible in our approach to theology.[125]

[121] Ramsey, 'Metaphysical Theology', 158.
[122] Ramsey uses 'its' for the Holy Spirit here.
[123] Ramsey, *Models for Divine Activity*, 3-6.
[124] Ramsey, *Models for Divine Activity*, 7. Italics are Ramsey's.
[125] Ramsey, *Models for Divine Activity*, 48-9.

Naming, Ramsey suggests, is an occasion for a disclosure. The ice breaks at a conference when we are all wearing name badges. Naming has religious significance as the occasion of a disclosure. Someone who tells us their name has granted us a disclosure and, as we accept that this is the name of the person, we make a characteristically personal response. A disclosure does not occur if we name someone. Here, Ramsey notes that we cannot name God, as to do so would mean it was in our power to create a religious situation and compel a religious disclosure. There are, he thinks, two exceptions to this: an explorer naming a new land and the baptism of a child. Both labels become names when brought into a worshipful situation. The land is dedicated 'in the name of God'; the child's label becomes a name in a worshipful situation, a service of baptism. However, Ramsey thinks his broad generalisation is still valid.[126]

The disclosure of God's name in Exodus 3:14 has a logic that portrays the character of a religious commitment. It is a tautology, not a straightforward assertion. Variant translations are superfluous and misleading, Ramsey thinks. God's name 'escapes us'. "I'm I" is a phrase used by humans to talk of commitment and loyalty. God's name remains mysterious. A name, obtained in disclosure, can become a label, a friendship can become cold. If we fully knew God's name our vision of God could be atrophied. We might start to love the name rather than He who disclosed it. Only God knows His name. The religious situation pertains when someone is about to disclose their name. We can never fully know God. The Tetragrammaton is as far as we can go in naming God. This elusiveness of God's name protects us from idolatry.[127]

Disclosure, therefore, is an in breaking of understanding. 'The penny drops'. The person before us is someone, not some object. The landscape we see has a history, a set of names, some places. It takes on 'depth'. Ramsey struggles to prove that there is a subject and an object in disclosure situations, and does not seem to have satisfied his critics on this point. But if we assume there is both an 'I' and a 'world', then Ramsey's account of coming to understand is within the experience of many.

A further objection is to the development of the stories. We do not need to conclude our stories with God. Hudson observes that Russell and Ayer concluded their trains of causal thinking without requiring a First Cause. Just because the concept of First Cause can occur to someone, this does not mean that the concept has epistemological objectivity. The conceptual

[126] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 108-10.
[127] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 110-2.

load of the First Cause argument is agency. It cannot logically require an answer in terms of that which is uncaused, that is, God.[128]

We can concede that there is no logical requirement to answer a train of causes with a First Cause. That does not mean that the terminus of the sequence is not the First Cause. The terminus sits outside the sequence, in the same way as the sum of a converging infinite series is not a member of the infinite series.[129] Logic, after all, cannot derive anything that is not already implied by its premises. God is not implied by the premises of the argument from causation, and we do not have to develop the argument to that extent. This does not mean that doing so is illegitimate or illogical.

Gaskin objects that Ramsey uses the term disclosure too widely. It covers a hugely diverse range of experiences, from learning someone's name to grasping the meaning of the Resurrection. For example, the case of Newton's apple yields the theory of gravitation which can be tested. This is not the same sort of insight as into the Resurrection which has no precise test. Gaskin claims that there is similarity in the feelings of discovery, not in the cognitive significance of the contents of discovery.[130]

Gaskin appears to have missed here what Ramsey (and Lonergan) observes. The cognitive process developing the theory of gravitation and the understandings of the Resurrection is the same process, even though the content, the object of thought, changes. While the details will vary from subject to subject, the same mind can think both about falling bodies and Resurrected persons. The underlying unity of Ramsey's disclosures is given by the fact that the human mind can think about them all.

There is a problem with the objective reference of disclosures, Gaskin argues. Ramsey suggests that we cannot be mistaken about the objective reference of a disclosure, but we can be mistaken about the articulation of it.[131] I may experience X and articulate it as disclosure A, and you may have the same experience and articulate it as disclosure B. If Newton's disclosure had been articulated as 'the space between particles is filled with gas having negative weight' the articulation and the objective content would have been different. Articulation and objective content are not easily distinguishable.[132]

Gaskin seems to be slightly in error here. Gravitation has been described in many different ways, from Ptolemy to Einstein. The articulations of the different theories vary, yet the

[128] Hudson, 'Discernment Situations', 438-9.
[129] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 69-70.
[130] J. C. A. Gaskin, 'Disclosures', *Religious Studies* 9, 2 (1973), 131-141, 134.
[131] Ramsey, 'Facts and Disclosures'.
[132] Gaskin, 'Disclosures', 138.

objective contents, of apples falling and planets orbiting, remain the same. Some theories may reduce to others under special circumstances, but some descriptions are incompatible. Thus it seems that Ramsey is correct to suggest that often the objective content of the disclosure and its articulation can be separated.

Whether a cosmic disclosure always refers to Christianity is not a question Ramsey raises. It seems likely to me that the response of a person to a cosmic disclosure will be mediated by their previous experiences. The response of a person to any sort of disclosure will be informed by their previous knowledge, understanding and experience. To adopt Plantinga's response to the Great Pumpkin objection, it is irrational to dismiss something that seems self-evident to you. What seems self-evident may well depend on other things, such as your upbringing.[133] While being born in a Christian country does not make you a Christian, it might pre-dispose you to having the Christian God disclosed to you.

3.3.3 Commitment

Much of the commentary and critique of Ramsey's ideas has been focussed around the concept of disclosure. This is important, but Ramsey in fact has a twofold characterisation of religious language in a religious situation: disclosure and commitment.[134] Ramsey's second group of examples in *Religious Language* are designed to illustrate commitment.[135]

For Ramsey there are two sorts of commitments, which he terms 'mathematical' and 'personal'. In mathematical reasoning, Ramsey argues, there is still a commitment. We opt for a particular geometry, depending on what we are doing. For playing tennis, Euclidian geometry is the wise choice. For general relativity, Riemann geometries are used. Ramsey's point is that this is a choice, a commitment. The commitment is non-trivial in context, but not very serious in broader implication. It is also the case that something true somewhere in mathematics is true everywhere. There is a loose relation to 'fact'. This is the price of universality. Mathematics expresses a partial commitment to the whole universe.[136]

A personal commitment organises a person's life. A person can be devoted to cricket, or a captain to their ship. We can fall in love, and the existence of the other person organises our lives. As a commitment this may be opaque to another person until the empirical anchorage

[133] A. Plantinga, 'Reason and Belief in God', in *The Analytic Theist: An Alvin Plantinga Reader*, ed. J. F. Sennett (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 102-61, 117, 150.
[134] Macquarrie, *God-Talk*, 118.
[135] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 28-37.
[136] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 33-4.

becomes clear. There is an explanation, but it has to be sought after. This, Ramsey says, is associated with an 'insight'. The anchorage is given when the penny drops.[137]

Religious commitment has elements of both mathematical and personal commitment. It has the element of total commitment with the breadth of mathematical. It does, perhaps, favour the characteristics of the personal commitment. Religious commitment is a response to something outside us, and it is such that only a personal revolution can cause us to give it up. Religious commitment is a total commitment to the whole universe. Christian religion in particular focusses a cosmic commitment on Christ.

With discernment goes a personal commitment. There is, Ramsey says, a difference between choosing to do X and being told to do X. His example is choosing and being compelled to join a committee. When we choose we exercise free will. Our response involves our whole personality.[138] Ramsey suggests that there are two views of free will. One argues that human behaviour is completely determined by antecedent cause factors and is, therefore, scientifically describable. The other is that someone's actual behaviour somehow eludes complete description in scientific terms. The first, Ramsey remarks, is 'scientific humanism', the other is characteristically 'religious'.[139]

Ramsey argues that free will is not just the possibility of alternatives. A free decision to do one's duty is not only implying that there was an alternative but that there was something additional to the spatio-temporal events, and that this is to do with our sense of obligation.[140] A decision has personal backing. Only the individual can know whether this is the case; the 'observables', the cause factors, may well be the same. Ramsey gives a number of examples. One is the Duke of Newcastle who dreamt that he was making a speech in the House of Lords, and awoke to find that he was. Assuming continuity in speech, the Duke's word would only have his personal backing when he woke. His colleague Lordships might not notice any difference, but to the Duke himself only the latter part of the speech could be described by him as 'I am speaking'. Free will decisions are denoted by 'I' for each of us, not object words like 'he' or 'The Duke'.[141]

If we only accept objective behaviour, Ramsey argues, we cannot account for free decisions. In a free decision a 'transcendent' part of someone's personality is disclosed. This comes with personal backing. Ramsey accepts that situations are complex, but thinks that ultimately there

[137] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 35.
[138] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 29.
[139] Ramsey, *Freedom and Immortality*, 17.
[140] Ramsey, *Freedom and Immortality*, 20-1.
[141] Ramsey, *Freedom and Immortality*, 22-3.

is something more than just scientific facts. Each human is a 'biochemical playground for fats, proteins and carbohydrates', but we realise ourselves to be more than this when we decide.[142]

Trigg criticises Ramsey for emphasising commitment and thus marking religious language off from language as a whole.[143] Trigg argues that belief and commitment are logically separate. A belief provides a reason for a commitment in religion as in any other sphere of life. Belief can occur without commitment. Ramsey's view, however, is of all or nothing; full commitment or infidelity.[144]

Trigg's example is Ramsey's view of the Resurrection. For Ramsey, the question 'Did the Resurrection happen?' is not like the question 'Did Queen Anne's death occur?' Grammatical similarities aside, the questions are different. There may be data, such as an empty tomb, and these might be believed, but this does not yield a Christian belief in the Resurrection. That requires a Christian commitment. 'Did the Resurrection occur?' is a different question to 'Did the empty tomb occur?'[145]

Ramsey's view on the logical oddity of religious utterances only, Trigg thinks, leads to the separation of religious and other language. Ramsey, as Wittgenstein, plays down the propositional element of religious belief and emphasises commitment. The ultimate end of such a view is the placing of religion as a form of life, wherein the use of religious language is valid. Trigg argues that religious language, as the language used by people who have religious belief, cannot be of one type, and is neither uniform nor distinct from language used in other contexts. Ramsey's view, he argues, is dangerous.[146]

Ramsey's claim that religious language is logically odd leads, in Trigg's view, to placing religious beliefs 'beyond the scope of reason and evidence'. Trigg concedes that Ramsey is unwilling to give up the idea that there might be relevant evidence for belief in the Resurrection, but Trigg believes that Ramsey's argument leads to fideism.[147] Religious language is not separate from language as a whole, in Trigg's view.

Beirne suggests that at the time of writing *Religious Language*, Ramsey's concept of disclosure was incomplete, and his focus was on justifying the use of religious language. The facts of the Resurrection, for a later Ramsey, would be key to the disclosure. The tomb was empty and so there was a disclosure. A different event could have given the same disclosure, but the story

[142] Ramsey, *Freedom and Immortality*, 26.
[143] Trigg, *Reason and Commitment*, 77.
[144] Trigg, *Reason and Commitment*, 79-80. Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 130.
[145] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 127.
[146] Trigg, *Reason and Commitment*, 80-1.
[147] Trigg, *Reason and Commitment*, 80.

would have been different. She argues that the language of the Gospels is logically odd because it has to point to disclosures that go far beyond the observables. The language originates in an observable situation, although, in the case of the Resurrection, one that is not repeatable.[148]

It is not obvious that Trigg's criticism of Ramsey is valid. While some of the argument Ramsey deploys in his discussion of the Resurrection is open to Trigg's questioning, a broader view of Ramsey's work suggests that, rather than separating religious language from everyday language, he is concerned to integrate them, while respecting the differences. Trigg perhaps over-emphasises Ramsey's view of commitment in his disclosure-commitment concept, as opposed to other authors who, as noted, over emphasise disclosure. Ramsey views commitment, in Trigg's view, as a stark choice between 'infidelity' and 'full commitment'. For Trigg there is no room for doubt in Ramsey's scheme.

One of Ramsey's catch phrases, however, is that we can be sure of God but we must be tentative in theology.[149] This is rather at variance with Trigg's representation of Ramsey's views. Trigg objects that people are committed to Christ because they believe in the Resurrection, among other things. Belief could occur without commitment. Alternatively, someone might believe in the Resurrection but refuse to base their life upon it. Ramsey accepts these possibilities:

> If the word 'Resurrection' refers to such 'data' as an 'empty tomb', visions, etc. all these might not only have happened but be believed without in any sense there being a Christian belief in the Resurrection; without there being a Christian commitment…. So, 'Did the Resurrection occur?' has *not* the same logic as 'Did the empty tomb occur?' if for no other reason than that the second can be asserted while the first is denied, and the second might even be, and by some has been, denied while the first has been asserted.[150]

Further, of course, even if Ramsey's view does open the path to some sort of fideism, it is not necessary for Ramsey to take that route.[151]

3.3.4 Summary

Ramsey has a well worked out scheme describing human cognitional process. While it is not, perhaps, as systematic as Lonergan's, it stands up well to the criticisms that have been aimed at it. It is important to note that the stages of the process go together. We have a disclosure

[148] Beirne, *Logic of Disclosures*, 85-6.
[149] I. T. Ramsey, *Christian Discourse: Some Logical Explorations*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 89.
[150] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 127. Italics in original.
[151] See T. Penelhum, 'Fideism', in *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion*, ed. P. L. Quinn and C. Taliaferro (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 376-82.

and make a commitment. Often critics have emphasised one of these elements and not the other, leading to a lop-sided view of Ramsey's approach. Ramsey, it seems, while he did write more about disclosures than commitment, would not see them as anything more than logically separable. We do not receive a cosmic disclosure of the whole universe and of God without making some sort of commitment, whether it is to the God who discloses himself to us, or to ignore, avoid or deny that which is disclosed.

3.4 Lonergan and Ramsey on Cognitive Process

3.4.1 General Comparison

It is the central hypothesis of this thesis that Lonergan's and Ramsey's ideas on cognitive process are commensurate, and that they can be used to complement each other. The authors come from different backgrounds, both ecclesiastical and philosophical, and so it is necessary to provide a direct comparison of their similarities and differences.

Most obviously, the language they use is different. Lonergan describes a four step process of experience, insight, judgment and decision, while Ramsey describes situation, disclosure and commitment (Table 3.1). Both consider the cognitive process to be dynamic and the key point to occur by an act of the individual: Ramsey uses a metaphor where the 'penny drops' or the 'ice breaks';[152] Lonergan describes Archimedes saying 'Eureka' or a student banging a desk and saying 'I've got it'.[153]

Lonergan	**Ramsey**
Experience	Situation
Insight	Disclosure
Judgment	
Decision	Commitment

Table 3.1: Comparison of Lonergan's and Ramsey's Cognitive Processes

Ramsey and Lonergan both rely on experience to give the basis for cognitional process. Ramsey is most interested in situations, particularly situations of religious significance. However, he describes a wide variety of situations, such as courtrooms, parties and telling jokes, in which 'the ice breaks'.[154] Ramsey's cognitive process thus starts from a wider variety of situations than the religious. Lonergan also starts from a variety of experiences, and such experiences are to be situated in a context. The starting points, 'situation' and 'experience' are similar.

[152] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 19.
[153] Lonergan, 'Insight Revisited', 225; Lonergan, *Insight*, 27-8.
[154] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 19-21.

Lonergan describes the next stage in the cognitive process as an insight, being the answer to the question 'what is it?' This is the question for intelligence. The answer is to catch on, to grasp something. Ramsey describes this as a disclosure, where 'the penny drops'. We can see that these two concepts are, for practical purposes, identical.

Lonergan then generalises the insight into a concept and, for him, the concept then requires an answer to the question for reflection 'is it so?' Ramsey does not include this step and we conclude that it is in his idea of disclosure. Lonergan is providing a more detailed understanding of cognitive process.

Similarly, Ramsey does not explicate the stage of reflective questioning and judgement. Ramsey argues that the disclosure is correct even if the articulation of it is not.[155] Lonergan incorporates a further step here where the answer to the question for reflection can be 'yes', 'no' or 'maybe'. For Lonergan, insights of any nature are 'a dime a dozen' and only a few are right. The stage of judgment sorts out the correct from the incorrect and those for which we have insufficient evidence.

We can assume that Ramsey partially incorporates judgment into his stage of commitment. However, the most natural parallel for Ramsey's commitment is Lonergan's level of decision. Ramsey can argue that we only commit ourselves to something if we believe that it is right. This is a free commitment, to duty or to conscience. Lonergan understands his decision to be something made freely. We can make a judgment, in his view, but do nothing about it. A decision means, in general, that we expect to take action on the basis of the judgement.

Thus we can see that the two different descriptions of human cognitive process are similar. There are, however, some differences. Firstly, Lonergan specifies that his process is intentional and Ramsey does not. Secondly, Ramsey's cognitional process appears to be intuitive while Lonergan's seems to be strictly rational. We shall consider whether these differences are significant. Initially, however, we need to establish how Lonergan's views might aid Ramsey's difficulties over objectivity.

3.4.2 Subjectivity and Objectivity

We have seen that Ramsey runs into considerable criticism over his assertion, rather than proof, of the objective reference of a disclosure. We have also seen that Lonergan claims that objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity. We propose that Lonergan's argument will back Ramsey's assertion.

[155] Ramsey, 'Facts and Disclosures', 172.

Ramsey makes the assumption of honesty. A disclosure can be articulated, and articulated accurately. However, this does not mean, in Lonergan's terms, that the articulation is not subject to bias. The subject may be more or less authentic. Indeed, total authenticity is an ideal, not something that can be realised. Ramsey's articulations, therefore, may vary from person to person, or even from the same person at different times. In this sense, Lonergan's authenticity and Ramsey's concept of personal backing are similar. We cannot be authentic while dreaming, nor can we give something our personal backing.

Lonergan claims that true objectivity, knowing the world as it is, arises from authentic subjectivity. We can know the world objectively, if we are intellectually, morally and religiously converted, if we genuinely attend, are intelligent, reasonable and rational. Given these conditions, holding as much as humanly possible, Ramsey's assertion of the objective reference can be upheld. While no human has absolute genuine authenticity, we can examine ourselves for our lacks, and make allowances for those lapses we cannot identify. We can hold an object as virtually unconditioned. We can know, know the object that we perceive, understand and pass judgement about.

In terms of Ramsey's difficulties over the objectivity of the reference of a disclosure, Lonergan's views can help. Lonergan's division of cognitive process is more detailed than Ramsey's and yields steps which Ramsey compresses, especially where this compression leads Ramsey into a misstep. The solution to Ramsey's problem of objective reference is to tease apart the aspects of disclosure using Lonergan's concept of the stage of judgment.

3.4.3 Intentionality

Lonergan describes his cognitive process as a set of conscious and intentional operations arranged in a succession of different levels of consciousness.[156] The modern philosophical use of 'intentionality' derives from Brentano.[157] According to Lonergan, 'Brentano inspired Husserl and intentionality analysis routed faculty psychology.'[158]

According to Brentano, then, 'To say that thought is intentional is to say that it intends or is *about* something, that it aims at or is directed upon an intended object.'[159] Lonergan's

[156] Lonergan, *Method*, 16.
[157] T. Crane, 'Intentionality', in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, ed. T. Honderich (Oxford: OU, 2005), 438-9. See also W. Baumgartner, 'Brentano, Franz', in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, ed. T. Honderich (Oxford: OU, 2005), 106-8.
[158] Lonergan, *Method*, 93.
[159] D. Jacquette, 'Brentano's Concept of Intentionality', in *The Cambridge Companion to Brentano*, ed. D. Jacquette, *Cambridge Companions to Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 98-130, 98.

cognitive process, therefore, is intentional; it applies when we are trying to work something out.

Ramsey's cognitive process is not obviously derived from intentionality analysis. Some of his examples would seem to be more about intuition than about trying to work something out. Thus the judge who realises that the accused is an old friend is not specifically trying to decide who the person in front of him is.[160]

According to Pears, '… anyone who acts intentionally must know two things: he must know what he is engaged in doing; and he must know when he has succeeding in doing it.'[161] On this showing Ramsey's views are compatible with intentionality analysis. The judge is in a situation where he has to examine the accused. His aim is to decide on their guilt or innocence. The situation is one where the judge knows that they are examining the accused and that they will know when they have done so. The fact that the accused is an old school friend is not the outcome that might be expected, but then nor was Archimedes' insight. Although Ramsey is not explicitly reliant on intentionality analysis, his cognitive process is phenomenological, in that he shows examples of the mind at work.

Lonergan and Ramsey, therefore, have similar understandings of how we go about intentionally thinking and acting. Lonergan is explicit about this, Ramsey is not. Ramsey probably has a rather wider range of situations in mind when discussing disclosures: regarding a landscape while someone tells you the names of the places you can see is not necessarily intentional, at least on the part of the observer. However, Ramsey's views are compatible with intentionality analysis.

3.4.4 Intuition

Ramsey differentiates two sorts of facts. Firstly, there are perceived facts. A fact for Ramsey is something given to us in experience as other than ourselves. A perceived fact is given by an object or, in some circumstances, by a person. A disclosed fact goes beyond perceived facts. If a perceived fact is given to us by our senses, a disclosed fact is known by our mental sense, intuition.[162] Cohen argues that the mind is more passive in reception of perceived fact, but more actively reaches out through perceived fact to be met by disclosed fact, but Ramsey says that we select and point out perceived facts, and reach disclosed fact by their disclosing themselves to us. These are facts such as Duty, Moral Law and other persons.

[160] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 19.
[161] D. Pears, *Paradox and Platitude in Wittgenstein's Philosophy*, (Oxford: OUP, 2006), 42.
[162] Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 88-9. Cohen, 'Some Aspects of Ian Ramsey's Empiricism', 4-5.

Intuition is a rather contested philosophical concept.[163] Ramsey makes this situation a little worse by claiming that we cannot be mistaken about disclosures.[164] The problem is, of course, that our intuitions can be unreliable. Ramsey's argument that we cannot be mistaken about something that is other than ourselves but that we can be mistaken in its articulation is not convincing. Ramsey does concede that not everyone in a given experience situation will have the same disclosure, but he claims that the disclosure is incorrigible when obtained, even if we misspeak about it.

Beirne argues that Ramsey needs a cognitive theory to underpin his description of the experience of disclosure, and suggests that Lonergan's ideas would form such a theory. Ramsey could then have constructed an epistemological framework on the cognitive process and hence a metaphysics.[165] We have already suggested that Ramsey's implicit and Lonergan's explicit cognitive processes are similar, and that Ramsey's disclosure and Lonergan's insight are the same process within a single cognitive process. We can thus use Lonergan's ideas to reinterpret Ramsey's comments about disclosures and their incorrigibility.

Lonergan does not accept that an insight is incorrigible. Knowledge is only obtained at the end of an experience – insight – judgment process. That is, the insight, to be accepted as knowledge, has to be judged to be correct. Most insights get rejected at the stage of judgment. Lonergan can thus deal with questions of hallucinations and illusions by observing that what is seen need not be accepted as fact.

While Ramsey claims to be acting in an empirical framework, we have already seen that he goes beyond the strictly empirical. Lonergan's definition is that the empiricist believes that to know is to 'take a look'. For Lonergan, knowing is explanatory, not just sensory.[166] Lonergan can also deal with the factors that inhibit insight – ego and bias – and also the reasons as to why some people obtain an insight in a given situation and some do not – the flight from insight.[167]

Lonergan's cognition is also dependent upon intuition, but an intuition that is mediated through judgment. The intuition is the responsibility of the individual. No-one can have it for them; the role of a teacher is to provide the conditions for a student to obtain the insight, and

[163] J. Pust, *Intuition*, in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed E. N. Zalta, 2017, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2017/entries/intuition/ (accessed 2 August 2017).
[164] Ramsey, 'Facts and Disclosures', 174.
[165] Beirne, *Logic of Disclosures*, 111-3.
[166] Beirne, *Logic of Disclosures*, 113.
[167] Lonergan, *Insight*, 5-6.

to help them to pass a correct judgment on it.[168] The correct equivalence is between an insight judged correct in Lonergan's process and Ramsey's incorrigible disclosure, not between the latter and Lonergan's 'raw' insight.

Lonergan, therefore, answers some of the criticisms of intuitionalist epistemology because he does not accept the incorrigibility of an intuition. The insight needs testing and verifying. If we accept that Ramsey's incorrigible disclosure, which we can only misarticulate, in fact includes Lonergan's judgment stage of cognitive process, we can both enhance the overlap of the two thinker's cognitive process and account, in Ramsey's scheme, for error and illusion.

3.4.5 Conclusion

Lonergan's and Ramsey's cognitional processes are different, in that they divide the stages of cognition up in different ways. However, we have seen that they both start with an experience, a situation, and both rely on an intuitive moment described as insight or disclosure. Lonergan details the next stages much more than Ramsey, describing them as the formation of a concept, the question for reflective understanding and a judgment. Ramsey compresses all of this into his disclosure. This compression explains why Ramsey can claim that disclosures are incorrigible, as he has included a step of judgment within his disclosure.

Once the judgment has been formed, both Ramsey and Lonergan move on to a commitment or decision stage. This is the start of their ethical discussions. However, we note that for Ramsey, in a religious situation, the response of an individual to a cosmic disclosure and commitment is wonder, awe and worship.[169] Lonergan takes, perhaps, a longer or more general route, but he too arrives at what he calls the 'question of God'. This is not for Lonergan initially anything other than the question 'does there exist a reality that transcends the reality of this world?'[170] We have a capacity for self-transcendence which is actualised by falling in love. Being in love with God is unrestricted love, and the fulfilment of our conscious intentionality. The love is unmeasured, attractive, fascinating, and mysterious and evokes awe. This is, Lonergan says, operative grace, but it seems that it would also be appropriate to describe it as worship.[171]

Overall, we find the central hypothesis, that Lonergan's and Ramsey's cognitive processes are similar, to be confirmed. Lonergan provides more detail and expands parts which Ramsey over-compresses, but Ramsey, more explicitly, explains how certain situations might lead to worshiping God.

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[168] Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*, 205.
[169] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 89.
[170] Lonergan, *Method*, 97.
[171] Lonergan, *Method*, 101-4. See also Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*.

4 Lonergan and Ramsey on Language and Meaning

4.1 Introduction

We have discussed the views of Ramsey and Lonergan on science in Chapter 2 and cognitive process in Chapter 3. The conclusions have been that, although their emphases and the quantity of detail they show differ, their views are compatible. Indeed, we have suggested that Lonergan's views on cognitive process can be used to defend Ramsey's approach from some of his critics.

This chapter examines Ramsey's and Lonergan's views on language and meaning. Ramsey is best known as a philosopher of religious language and provides a detailed discussion of how language functions, both in general and with respect to religion. Lonergan provides much less discussion of language per se. Much of his account revolves around how meanings are developed, understood and evolve in a culture.

Language and meaning are the first areas where we can see that Ramsey's and Lonergan's views diverge. Essentially this divergence seems to be around the 'transparency' of language. Ramsey thinks that any linguistic event can only be a partial exposition of a real world event. The recipient of a description of an event needs a disclosure to reach a full understanding. Language can never fully describe a real world state or event.

Lonergan has a view of language that it is more transparent. For him, for example, doctrine was revealed once, fully and truthfully, to the church. It is the church's role to understand these linguistic events in the context of the time and translate them into the context into which they are to be preached. Therefore, Lonergan focusses on meanings and the ways meanings can evolve, not strictly on how accurately language can describe the original events.

In part, these differences can be traced to the author's different views of science. Lonergan takes a more mathematical view, where things can be expressed more precisely. Ramsey takes a more model based view, where a model is a partial representation of reality. Ramsey is therefore prepared to accept more readily the use of metaphor in all language, especially religious, while Lonergan seems to seek after an ultimate viewpoint where all is clear, even if that viewpoint is not attainable.

Ramsey takes a more comprehensive view of language than Lonergan, and so this discussion and comparison will start with his views. We will then discuss Lonergan's views on meaning and try to determine his position with respect to language. We find that the two views are

different but not incompatible, and develop a hybrid language model from combining aspects of both (Section 4.4).

4.2 Ramsey on Language

4.2.1 Introduction

Ramsey's concern is, in part, the attack on theology from logical positivism, expressed by Ayer.[1] According to this, theological words have no direct empirical relevance: 'God' is not like 'tree' or 'colour'. Nor do theological words have indirect empirical relevance like 'electron' or 'potential' in science. Theological words cannot be 'mapped'; there is a problem of falsification.[2] A believer can modify the attributes of God to account for problematic circumstances. No evidence needs count against the existence of God.[3]

This is the challenge Ramsey sees from linguistic analysis to theology. However, he thinks that linguistic analysis is in search of an ontology, a factual reference. Russell thought this must be ultimately sense data, but that is not the case. What the factual reference might be is unclear. For example, Ramsey cites Ryle as leaving uncertain whether the explanation of mental concepts in terms of observable behaviour is adequate.[4]

4.2.2 Language Maps

Ramsey's first view of language is based around the analogy of a map. Logical mapwork is concerned to show the linguistic context in which a particular concept sentence is placed.[5] Ramsey wishes to justify the position of theological words on a language map, and elucidate their empirical relevance. At this relatively early stage of his thinking, the language map contains words used at different levels. A word used at one level might be nonsense at another: 'the square root of nine is plus or minus three' is a non-nonsense sentence. 'The square root of Pope is Addison' is nonsense. Thus there are 'subordinate' languages, such as the language of mathematics and that of history, within a total language map. An apparently homogenous language is sorted into a continuous hierarchy of languages.[6]

Thus, for Ramsey, the challenge of linguistic analysis to theology is to ensure that words are used at the correct level. 'Grass is green' is a sentence used at an obvious level. In 'God is green' the levels or subordinate languages are mixed. Ramsey thinks that with each

[1] A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, (Mineola: Dover, 1946), Chapter 6. I. T. Ramsey, 'Challenge of Contemporary Philosophy to Christianity', *Modern Churchman* 42, 3 (1952), 252-269, 254.
[2] A. Flew, 'Theology and Falsification', in *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, ed. A. Flew and A. MacIntyre (London: SCM, 1955), 96-9.
[3] Ramsey, 'Challenge', 257.
[4] G. Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, (London: Penguin, 1949); Ramsey, 'Challenge', 258.
[5] Ramsey, 'Miracles', 2.
[6] Ramsey, 'Challenge', 260.

subordinate language there is an appropriate brand of 'fact'. With each language goes a particular 'fact-picture', as different maps of the same area give different pictures of the countryside. The countryside is not exhausted by any number of maps. Similarly, 'that of which we are aware is not reducible without residue to "observable facts" – it combines and includes them, and is more.'[7] The language map describes reality but does not exhaust it. Thus a scientific language map and a theological language map can co-exist. Neither exhausts the 'countryside'.

Ramsey notes that we cannot talk about anything we like, and that this limit is linguistic. There is a limit to the overall language. It is finite or has an apex. Empirically the subordinate languages are limitless but the total language map has boundary or index words. These give a clue to the total language scheme, as the words of the index to a book do to its content, and make concrete what is being talked about.[8] For Ramsey, index words fall outside and between subordinate languages and integrate them. Index words, therefore, are those which enable us to navigate between sublanguages on the map. They are metaphysical in nature. No one subordinate language is a complete language. In terms of the map analogy, index words are marginal words, where the map runs out and 'To Ely' extends a road, or 'Berk' is written in the margin to complement 'shire' on the map.[9] The use of languages with different logics is acceptable only if these index words link between them. They round off (as marginal words) or assist in factual reference (index words). These metaphysical words may belong to no one sublanguage; they can be used in all sublanguages, helping us navigate the boundaries. They are words such as 'I' and 'God'. They may also belong to a language of maximum generalisation – the top level of the hierarchy. Ramsey suggests 'activity' as an example here, presupposed by all language levels.[10]

Studdard has three objections to Ramsey's language maps. Firstly, Ramsey's map is too stratified and rigid, and does not reflect the complexities of language use. Secondly, Ramsey places science in a subordinate position on the map and this does not satisfy those who think science will someday write all the index words; nor does it prove them wrong. Thirdly, Ramsey's locating the language of science and religion on his overall map means that while they can never conflict, they can never meet either.[11]

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[7] Ramsey, 'Miracles', 3.
[8] Ramsey, 'Challenge', 261-2.
[9] Ramsey, 'Miracles', 14-5.
[10] Ramsey, 'Miracles', 16.
[11] A. Studdard, 'Ian T Ramsey: The Language of Science and the Language of Religion', in *Science, Faith, and Revelation: An Approach to Christian Philosophy*, ed. B. E. Patterson (Macon, Ga: Mercer University Press, 1979), 317-335, 332-3.

While Ramsey does use the notion of 'levels' of language, Studdard seems to have rather over-emphasised this. Ramsey is concerned to avoid category mistakes, such as 'England is prosperous and bald' being nonsense, as opposed to 'Mr Smith is prosperous and bald', which has the same structure and many of the same words, but the words operate in the former case at different 'levels'.[12] While the writings we have considered so far pre-date the publication of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, we can suggest that Ramsey did not mean his levels and hierarchies to be taken in a rigid manner, as Wittgenstein's language games should not be taken. Language games are not autonomous.[13]

The issue Studdard raises of subordinating scientific language on an overall map seems to be an error on his part. All languages are subordinated on Ramsey's map; science is not singled out for special treatment. There may well be people who think that science will write all the index words, but that does not make them correct in this claim. There are plenty of examples of language which cannot be reduced to scientific language, such as 'I promise I will meet you tomorrow at 5 o'clock'. Ramsey does not need to specifically refute Studdard's claim.

Finally, Studdard's claim that scientific and religious languages placed on the same map do not clash but cannot meet seems similarly erroneous. By placing them on the same overall map Ramsey has opened the possibility of them meeting. His argument is that index words are the route to two language areas engaging. Subordinate languages, Ramsey thinks, cannot yield an adequate picture of everything. He thinks the inadequacy is shown most easily in 'self-other awareness', which subordinate languages cannot describe.[14] Subordinate languages claim their 'objective' data, but there is a residue. This residue includes 'I', and so we can link, via the index word, the languages of mathematics ('I see that 2+2=4') and religion ('I see the meaning of the cross').[15]

Overall, then, Studdard's criticisms of Ramsey's ideas of a language map fail. Ramsey himself, however, did not persist with this analogy, although he does not seem to have abandoned it for any particular reason. He kept using the idea of key words, particularly 'I'.

4.2.3 The Elusive 'I'

'I', Ramsey claims, is used in a logically odd manner. He distinguishes two uses of the word. 'I' can be used as a vehicle to express the speaker's statements, or it can be used to refer to

[12] Ramsey, 'Challenge', 260.
[13] D. M. High, *Language, Persons, and Belief: Studies in Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations and Religious Uses of Language*, (New York: Oxford University, 1967), 87.
[14] Ramsey, 'Challenge', 262.
[15] Ramsey, 'Challenge', 265.

themselves.[16] 'I' does not have an exhaustive objective analysis. Ramsey claims that Descartes' *Cogito* is a claim for the curious status of 'I'. 'Me', on the other hand, often denotes something public. 'I'm dancing rock and roll' is said by someone who is dancing. 'He's dancing rock and roll' is said by a spectator. If a person holds a photograph and says 'This is me dancing rock and roll' the sentence is similar to the second one, and refers to objects, public, observable (or observed) behaviour.[17]

The logic of 'I' is not exhausted by being used in any subordinate language. Ramsey argues that an object theory of ourselves, as suggested by Hume, is inadequate.[18] To speak of everything 'I' refers to will require qualified phrases. They will have a foothold in observation language but their reference is partially beyond it. Ramsey claims that 'I' is a good guide to the usage of 'God', and that the main problem of theology is how to qualify observational language to be suitable currency for what exceeds it.[19]

Ramsey relies on Berkeley here. Self-knowledge for Berkeley is a 'curious empirical fact'. Talk about index words has led Ramsey to the empirical fact of self-other awareness. We are aware of our own activity. Hence we can, given evidence, be aware of other minds. For Berkeley, God is conceived analogically with reference to our mental operations. [20]

For Ramsey self-other awareness has a subject-object structure. If 'I' is the subjective side index word, 'person' is the index word on the objective side. 'Me' and 'other people' belong to subordinate, public, languages. 'God', Ramsey suggests, is a metaphysical index word, the apex word that closes the linguistic hierarchy.[21]

Ramsey argues that 'I' is given in a disclosure situation of our characteristic subjectivity. 'I' breaks into a series of distinct perceptions. Ramsey uses the challenge of Nathan to David as his example (2 Samuel 12). David gives an impersonal judgment on Nathan's story, then realises it refers to himself. His subjectivity is given with the discernment of a moral challenge.[22] Ramsey contends that 'God' has a logical behaviour that can be modelled on the logical oddness of 'I'.

From assertions such as 'I'm I', or 'I exist' we can, Ramsey argues, make no verifiable deductions. Everything else is contingent – hair colour, pulse rate and so on. However, 'He has

[16] Gill, *Ramsey*, 83.
[17] Ramsey, *Religion and Science*, 39.
[18] Hume, *Treatise*, Book 1, Part 4, Section 6, p 299-311.
[19] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 38.
[20] Ramsey, 'Challenge', 263. P. D. Cummins, 'Berkeley on Minds and Agency', in *The Cambridge Companion to Berkeley*, ed. K. P. Winkler (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), 190-229, 201.
[21] Ramsey, 'Challenge', 263-4.
[22] Ramsey, *Religion and Science*, 42-3.

a pulse rate of 65' does entail 'I exist'. By analogy, Ramsey argues that from 'God exists' nothing verifiable can be logically deduced. The world is not necessary to God.[23]

While accepting that linguistic philosophy is important McLain argues that Ramsey is mistaken in supposing that the self can be distinguished from what is observable.[24] Ramsey sometimes writes of the self as an observable: The Bishop's answer to the question 'Who preached last week?' can be 'The Bishop'.[25] Despite the language, McLain suggests that recollection is not of the actions of an objectified self. The Bishop meant to preach; his selfhood was involved.[26] McLain argues that, despite grammatical similarities, 'I move my arm' and 'I move my pen' are different. My arm is, in Ramsey's terms, an object, spatio-temporally describable, but it is part of me, not just an objectified me.

Knowledge of what I am doing intentionally often means, McLain says, pursuing today an intention formed yesterday. A project is taken up from where I left it, even if I feel different. When the task is done, I do not lose my sense of self identity. McLain seems to be suggesting here that our self-identity is comprised, in part, of our own narrative. With this, we do not need to posit an awareness of the I, he claims.[27]

Ramsey, McLain claims, defines 'I' in terms of a private, non-describable relationship to oneself. Ramsey says that we cannot describe in full our identity or the subject would be wholly objectified. There is more to 'I' than can be described.[28] McLain objects that the only difference is that I know and can state my intentions while you cannot, and this is the only difference between 'I' and 'he' language. 'I' is unique on these terms; Ramsey's approach runs the risk of solipsism.[29]

McLain's position here seems slightly at odds with his previous contention. If our self-identity is in part narrative, then the difference between 'I' and 'he' is more than current intentions. It includes my history, previous decisions and experiences. While these may be publicly describable in principle, they may not be in practice. For example, in Lonergan's terms, I might be suffering from unconscious bias. Therefore Ramsey seems to be correct in claiming that there is more to the 'I' than can be fully described.

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[23] Ramsey, *Religion and Science*, 73-4.
[24] F. M. McLain, 'From Odd Talk to God Talk', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 38, 3 (1970), 240 - 254, 254.
[25] Ramsey, 'Metaphysical Theology', 165.
[26] McLain, 'Odd Talk', 245-6.
[27] McLain, 'Odd Talk', 248.
[28] Ramsey, 'Metaphysical Theology', 166.
[29] McLain, 'Odd Talk', 249-50.

For McLain, to say that the logic of 'God' functions like that of 'I' means that God stands in a unique and private relationship to Himself of which we cannot be aware. Knowledge of God is thus impersonal, as knowledge of other selves. To know God is to make Him part of the world, like someone else's body and behaviour. Ramsey's claim that 'God is guaranteed to us very much as we are to ourselves' either means that the subject-object split is overcome, as the mystics say, or, McLain argues, is meaningless.[30] McLain notes that Ramsey seems to reject the mystic's claim, but appears to have read Ramsey's analogy over-literally. If, for whatever reason, we accept that we can know ourselves to be by a combination of description and intuition, Ramsey suggests that we can know God on the same basis.[31]

For McLain, Ramsey needs to unify a diversity of disclosures on a single metaphysical map. The self, God and other events are known in disclosures. The map of the Universe is to be as complete as possible. McLain thinks that God is logically comparable to a proper name, not to 'I', and therefore cannot serve as a unifying category. He suggests 'activity' as a useful integrating metaphysical category. Interestingly, Ramsey comes to a similar conclusion.[32] However, McLain's view seems to suppose that God is an object in the world, which is not generally accepted.

Ramsey's views stand up to McLain's criticisms. Ramsey does view the world as subject-object in nature, but only tries to claim that there is more to the subject than their public behaviour. Similarly, as we have seen, Ramsey claims there is more to the universe than publicly observable facts. While this might be disputable McLain has not disproved it. As with other aspects of Ramsey's thought, his commitment is not forced, but is reasonable.

4.2.4 Qualified Models

We have seen (Section 2.3.2) that Ramsey sees models and metaphors as resembling each other. They both provide us with possibilities of articulation and we employ them when words otherwise fail us. Metaphors are 'rooted in disclosures and born in insight'.[33] A metaphor states 'A is B', such as 'Jesus is the Messiah'. The copula 'is' points to a disclosure.[34] Metaphors and models are 'the basic currency for mystery'.[35] The use of metaphors and models, Ramsey

[30] Ramsey, 'The Systematic Elusiveness of 'I'', 22; McLain, 'Odd Talk', 251; Ramsey, 'Metaphysical Theology', 176.
[31] Ramsey, 'Metaphysical Theology', 176.
[32] McLain, 'Odd Talk', 253; Ramsey, *Models for Divine Activity*, 1-14.
[33] Ramsey, *Models and Mystery*, 50.
[34] Ramsey, *Models and Mystery*, 52.
[35] Ramsey, *Models and Mystery*, 53.

argues, is extended to every discipline. Poetry, for example, contains a profusion of models, a kaleidoscope of metaphors, and this is paralleled in theology.[36]

Religious phrases often have a model-qualifier structure, by means of which a model, such as 'wise' is extended by a qualifier, 'infinitely' to point to God. The model gives an empirical anchorage; the qualifier ensures that the phrase has a distinct logic. Examples of increasing human (empirical) wisdom are given until there is a disclosure and the theological situation is evoked. The phrase 'infinitely wise' tells us, through its logical oddness, how to use the word 'God' in relation to the theological situation.[37]

Ramsey often describes his model-qualifier system by analogy with mathematical systems.[38] Thus, the infinite sum 1+1/2+1/4+1/8… converges to 2. Two is not part of the sum, and any value of the summation less than 2, that is, if we truncate the sum at a number of terms less than infinity, will be imperfect compared to the next value. Two, Ramsey says, completes and presides over the series; it is a limit word for the series in the same way that 'God' is the limit word in theology, presiding over and unifying the words of empirical imperfection.[39]

It might be imagined, Ramsey says, that in saying, for example, that 'God is infinitely good' we are making God the last term in a sequence:

Ferdinand Lopez	who is hardly good
Long John Silver	who is fairly good
Solomon	who was just good
David	who was very good
St Barnabas	who was very good indeed
St Francis	who was intensely good
…	…
God	who is infinitely good.

The assumption that we are trying to proceed along this series is incorrect, Ramsey says. The logical structure of 'infinitely good' is complex, more so than the sequence of examples given suggests. Goodness is a model which stimulates us to tell stories, developing them in the right direction. We do so not to arrive at the infinite point, but to evoke a situation characterised by a goodness to admire and follow and to which we are prepared to yield everything. This is

[36] Ramsey, *Models and Mystery*, 55.
[37] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 65-6.
[38] I. G. Barbour, *Myths, Models and Paradigms: The Nature of Scientific and Religious Language*, (London: SCM, 1974), 61.
[39] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 59-60.

adoration, worship. 'Infinite' points us to develop these stories until the disclosure breaks in and points to something outside the sequence itself – God. Thus 'infinite' gives an appropriate placing to the word 'God'.[40]

Phillips criticises Ramsey's analogy. We can speak of an infinite sum of 2, 4, 6, 8, 10…, but this does not point to an infinite number. Thus Ramsey's analogy fails, because his sequence of the wise does not point to an infinitely wise term in God. Phillips seems to have missed that Ramsey is talking about convergent series, although he does comment that it is the sequence of numbers that determines that 2 is the sum of the series. Phillips argues that because Ramsey uses religious terms in his series, he predetermines the outcome as a theological term. Two has different uses in mathematics aside from the sum of a particular series. It has no privileged status over other numbers. 'God' however, for a believer, would have such privilege. It might be the limiting word for a given series relating to wisdom, but other uses which are not limiting words would be disallowed.[41]

Ramsey stands accused of assuming the answer he wants in the series he uses to obtain 'God' as a limit word. This is perhaps unfair. While Ramsey does use religious figures in his series for goodness, he does not in that for wisdom – a sixth-form prefect, an undergraduate, a lecturer and the president of the Royal Society are described as having different levels of wisdom, but are not, so far as I know, particularly religious figures.[42] Nevertheless, Phillips is pointing to a potential difficulty in Ramsey's position, in that his model-qualifiers point to God and Kierkegaard argues that such attempts to analyse one sort of proposition in terms of another are doomed from the outset and riddled with confusions. We cannot make the transition no matter how many terms are involved in the infinite approximation.[43] However, Ramsey is not doing that; his stories about goodness aim to evoke a disclosure, an intuitive jumping of the gap between, say, St Francis and God. The series is an analogy, not an attempt at analysis.

Tracy takes Ramsey's suggestions and develops them into the concept of 'limit-language'. He observes that Ramsey's position entails both odd personal discernment and total commitment in a religious situation. To articulate odd personal disclosures religious language may be appropriate. When a religious person says that Good is infinitely good they point to an empirical situation where they have loved and been loved. This love is a total commitment to

[40] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 67-8.
[41] D. Z. Phillips, 'Infinite Approximation', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 44, 3 (1976), 477 - 487, 482-3.
[42] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 65.
[43] Phillips, 'Infinite Approximation', 478-9.

the one religiously loved, that is God, and is distinguished from other loves by the odd language: God is infinitely loving.[44]

For Tracy, limit language is necessarily symbolic and metaphorical. Religious dimensions of life are not just another sort of human activity. Religious language therefore reflects a dimension which is the limit to our everyday moral, scientific, cultural and political activities.[45] Phillips seems to have rather overlooked the metaphorical role that Ramsey and others assign to religious language.

Ramsey's use of 'infinitely sided polygon' as an analogy for 'infinitely wise' is, Harris argues, using an analogy to support an analogy. Harris claims that this is weak and that some defence of prior knowledge must precede use of analogy. While this is possibly true, Harris is asking rather a lot of Ramsey here; it is a bit unfair to demand that Ramsey defend the use of all literal knowledge before being able to use a meaningful analogy. Analogies exist in language anyway, and are part of knowledge. Harris also argues that while Ramsey is correct that 'circle' is logically different from 'regular polygon' it is meaningless to talk of circles having sides.[46] Here Harris is incorrect; he seems to have missed that Ramsey is talking about the limit where the number of sides tends to infinity, a perfectly respectable mathematical procedure.

Harris objects that Ramsey's selection of models is determined by his understanding of 'God', and therefore qualified models cannot have the status Ramsey claims for them. Ramsey's models are traditionally associated with religion. Prior knowledge of the meanings of the religious terms is assumed. Harris maintains that the same point applies to the choice of qualifiers: prior knowledge is required for selection.[47] Ramsey can again reply that Harris' point applies to all language and all models. The Bohr model of the atom presupposes a large body of knowledge of words, mathematics and mechanics. The use of the word 'forcipulata' requires some knowledge of starfish; Harris' example of 'eternal forcipulata' is religiously worthless, as he says, because it is a category mistake, not because qualified models are useless.

Similarly, Cohen argues that Ramsey runs the risk of developing a theology of gibberish. She thinks that Ramsey has to implicitly choose his qualified models by the nature of the object disclosed. This, Cohen asserts, is descriptive – there is a relation between the model concepts and God. If Ramsey's view is that the meanings of words only have an evocative function, and

[44] Tracy, *Blessed Rage*, 122-3.
[45] Tracy, *Blessed Rage*, 108.
[46] J. F. Harris, Jr, 'Models and Qualifiers', *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 3, 2 (1972), 83-92, 90-1.
[47] Harris, 'Models and Qualifiers', 88-9.

if he disallows mutually contradictory models with strong bases in disclosures and empirical fit, Cohen's accusation of gibberish might be correct. In fact, Ramsey does allow contradictory models and does not deny (although he does not emphasise) the descriptive function of language.[48]

Cohen thinks that Ramsey is mistaken about metaphor and he needs to explain how metaphors juxtaposed by a qualifier lead to a disclosure. She also argues that an expression such as 'very wise' is not a metaphor. Ramsey can happily concede the latter point: it is 'infinitely wise' that is the metaphor. It is the juxtaposition of wisdom, which we know about in human terms, and infinite which yields the conditions for a possible disclosure. The other expressions are to put into human terms the meaning of the model.[49]

A model may, Cohen says, have empirical fit but be ineffective at producing disclosures. I think Ramsey could reply that this would be like some models in science, such as the Ptolemaic description of the solar system. This fits the movement of the planets, but was abandoned because it leads to no further understanding. Models can become unproductive.

Cohen suggests a thought experiment of drawing nouns and adjectives at random. Some would be qualified models from traditional theology which Ramsey has found useful: 'first cause' and 'infinitely wise'. Others might be redundant, such as 'perfect perfection', although it might lead to a disclosure. Similarly complex qualified models, such as 'all loving and good' could be created. Ramsey has no method of dealing with these, she says.[50] Ramsey would probably not worry too much about these cases. If they lead to cosmic disclosure and have empirical fit, he is likely to admit them to his set of models, even if they are not traditional expressions. Ramsey noted that religious language is not immutable.

Tilley regards qualified models as leading someone by the hand to evoke a divine disclosure.[51] Further, he sees them as examples of Thomist analogical meaning. Thus there is no guarantee that a qualified model will produce a disclosure of God.[52] Ramsey's aim is apologetic, removing logical improprieties that form stumbling blocks for pastoral ministry. The point of a qualifier is to shift the meaning of the model. The qualifiers 'push us along' in developing the model, to the point of obtaining a disclosure.[53]

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[48] C. B. Cohen, 'The Logic of Religious Language', *Religious Studies* 9, 2 (1973), 143-155, 154-5.
[49] Cohen, 'Religious Language', 153.
[50] Cohen, 'Religious Language', 151-3.
[51] T. W. Tilley, 'The Systematic Elusiveness of God: On the Fiftieth Anniversary of Ian Ramsey's Religious Language', *Horizons* 34, 1 (2007), 7-25, 16-7.
[52] Tilley, 'Systematic Elusiveness', 18-9.
[53] Ramsey, 'On Understanding Mystery', 68.

Evans divides Ramsey's qualified models into three groups. First, there are 'universalising' qualifiers, such as 'all'. The model is to apply to all things in the universe and more (i.e. to God). The language of the model is shifted by the language concerning God. Talk of God is talk about the universe and more and this occurs in a cosmic disclosure.[54]

The second group of qualifiers Evans calls 'perfecting'. Ramsey distinguishes 'God is all-loving' and 'God is infinitely loving'. The scope of the 'more' disclosed is not inherently cosmic; the series points to an absolute perfection. However, a cosmic disclosure is of God and God is also all-inclusive as well as perfect. Evans suggests that Ramsey's view tends towards Anselm – we seek a perfect love, wisdom, goodness than which none superior can be thought.[55]

Evan's third group of qualifiers are 'negating', such as 'im-' in 'immutable'. Ramsey says that the main merit of these are as a 'kind of technique for meditation; their main merit is evocative'.[56] A statement such as 'God is impassable' is logically comparable to 'thoughts are not spatial'. First order talk of God, for Ramsey, is understood to obey second order rules for our consistent talking.[57] Evans notes that for Ramsey, what seems to be first order talk ('God is immutable') is actually a second order rule. A lot of theology for Ramsey is talk about talk about God.[58] Thus, for Ramsey, a lot of theology is grammar (Section 1.5.2).

Ramsey suggests that models of God do conflict, but this is not a defect of religious language, but a feature. Models can be related in an orderly way, retaining their qualification of each other. Evans argues that Ramsey is clear about which models might be dominant (activity, person, love), but is not clear as to why. Evans finds that Ramsey works by both abstraction, limiting subordinate models to what they have in common with the dominant model, and by enrichment, drawing together the implications of all parts of all the models. Ramsey, Evans finds, does not give us rational grounds for choosing between models.[59]

Ramsey argues that we must use as many theological models as possible and should not suppose that the supply of models can be exhausted. Further, we must relate our discourse to the world around us. Models must have an empirical fit to the world, not as a scientific hypothesis but through meaning and relevance.[60] The problem is that empirical fit is rather hard to be sure about (Section 2.3.2). Ramsey does sometimes seem to think that a dominant

[54] D. Evans, 'Ian Ramsey on Talk About God (Continued)', *Religious Studies* 7, 3 (1971), 213 - 226, 217-8.
[55] Evans, 'Talk About God (Continued)', 218.
[56] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 53.
[57] Ramsey, *Religious Language*.
[58] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 173; Evans, 'Talk About God (Continued)', 222.
[59] Evans, 'Talk About God (Continued)', 224-5.
[60] I. T. Ramsey, 'Talking About God: Models, Ancient and Modern', in *Myth and Symbol*, ed. F. W. Dillistone (London: SPCK, 1966), 76 - 97, 85.

model should be determined, but we note that, in science, this is not always the case. We suggest that dominant models do not have to be selected.

Austin suggests that relations among models in both science and theology are important. Models are used to interpret experience. Austin thinks it is reasonable to expect such models to cohere. Tracing models back to their disclosures hints at reconciliation, but does not do the job. Models in physics, such as wave-particle duality, can be reconciled by appealing to quantum theory, but there does not seem to be a similar theological route. Ramsey argues that the claims of models are complementary in the sense they limit each other. Austin's view is that Ramsey does not discuss complementarity in enough detail. [61]

Ramsey's suggestions about complementarity are closer to modern physics ideas than Austin's. Austin thinks that wave-particle duality is a problem in physics and that physicists who consider it a pseudo-problem are dodging the question. Austin's claim about wave-particle duality is, however, at best partially true. Electrons, for example, are still treated as being both waves and as particles. Quantum theories do not reconcile the duality; electrons are accepted as electrons, with certain behaviours, not as reconciled waves and particles. Segrè notes that in physics two concepts are complementary when one imposes limits on the other.[62] Ramsey's suggestion is closer to this than Austin's suggestion, although Segrè also observes that complementarity is more of a way of thinking than a precise concept.

McClendon and Smith argue that a model seems to break down the connections between a disclosed quality (e.g. kindness) and an evoked commitment (e.g. gratitude). Kindness is qualified, its meaning changed, and so its link with gratitude is not assured. Ramsey, they say, does not provide a logical linguistic account of the relation between discernment and commitment. Further, they raise the question as to whether Ramsey thinks all religious language consists of disclosure language.[63]

The second point picks up on one raised by Smart: if the function of religious language is evoking a disclosure, it need not describe anything. But some religious language is descriptive.[64] I think Ramsey would agree that not all religious language is disclosure making, or that not everything is in terms of qualified models. His point is only that some language, often confusingly, is couched in such terms. It is also not clear that Ramsey has to provide an account of the relation of discernment and commitment. It can be taken as an empirical fact,

[61] W. H. Austin, 'Models, Mystery, and Paradox in Ian Ramsey', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 7, 1 (1968), 41-55, 51-4.
[62] E. Segrè, *From X-Rays to Quarks*, (Oxford: Freeman, 1980), 167.
[63] McClendon and Smith, ' Qualified Appreciation', 420-1.
[64] Smart, 'Intellectual Crisis', 231.

perhaps, that some disclosure situations lead to commitment. A disclosure of love for another person entails commitment to that other; there does not seem to be a particular reason to have to argue for a logical relation between the two.

4.2.5 Conclusion

Ramsey's view of language is that it is a homogenous whole but can be mapped into separate sub-languages of, for example, theology and physics. This avoids category mistakes but could open him to the charge of not allowing different areas of discourse to interact. However, the concepts of key words and later, models, avoid this by uniting areas of discourses at their boundaries. Thus, a scientist can state that 'I think the sun is at 6000 degrees Centigrade'; an element of subjectivity has been introduced via the key word 'I'. For Ramsey, this is sufficient to claim a dialogue with the universe which is personal.

Ramsey then proceeds to claim that 'I' and 'God' are analogous. 'I' is not exhausted by spatio-temporal activity. By analogy, 'God' is not exhausted by the universe. In both cases there is something beyond the spatio-temporal. Ramsey can maintain the empirical grounding of 'God' when we are confronted by the whole universe. But any argument from analogy is, of necessity, rather weak. He can claim the analogy, but he cannot prove it to be the case.

Ramsey extends the idea of scientific models to theological models. He notes the existence of model-qualifier couplets in much theological description and discussion, and argues that these point us in the direction of a cosmic disclosure of God, the 'more' of the universe. Each scientific model has its range of applicability and use, and can be verified within that. It is more difficult to determine these aspects for theological models. Ramsey argues that we need as many theological models as possible, but does not provide particular grounds for deciding which are dominant, although he accepts that some are. It is possible that Ramsey is incorrect here. If scientists can live with multiple models describing the same phenomena, there seems little reason to suppose that theologians must choose a dominant model.

Ramsey places religious language in the context of religious situations, and these situations consist of discernment and commitment.[65] Macquarrie suggests that analytic philosophers might be willing to stress commitment, in terms of moral or social duty, but would be reluctant to admit a cognitive dimension of discernment, especially if it discloses a trans-human reality.[66]

[65] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 19-38.
[66] Macquarrie, *God-Talk*, 118.

Ramsey argues that a solely social account of religion is inadequate.[67] The language has to be set in an ontological context.

Ramsey's views of religious language are robust and stand up to his critics. It is unfortunate that he never managed to produce a comprehensive account of his views as the fragmentation of his work makes it difficult for researchers to obtain an overview of his thought. The focus of much criticism is *Religious Language*, but this stands early in his thought and should be nuanced by some of his later ideas, particularly relating to models and metaphors.

4.3 Lonergan on Language and Meaning

Lonergan seems to regard meaning as more fundamental than language. Meaning is carried by human intersubjectivity, art, symbols, language and people.[68] Meaning finds its greatest liberty in language, a set of conventional signs which can be multiplied indefinitely, differentiated and specialised.[69]

Language moulds consciousness and structures the word around the subject. As our command of language grows we can denote what is present, what is absent, the past and the future. This is Lonergan's 'larger world', the world mediated by meaning. It is an insecure world, full of myth as well as science, fiction and fact, deceit and error as well as honesty and truth. Meaning enables people to work, plan and decide. It also permits social institutions and culture, and it can, of course, be communicated.[70]

Lonergan's view of language is based on an interpretation of Thomist thought. We first outline this, which provides a link to Lonergan's cognitive process, and then discuss his theory of levels of meaning. The main criticism of Lonergan's ideas of language is that he assumes that language, in a given context, is nearly transparent. That is, he seems to think that any thought can be expressed accurately in a given language at a given time and place. While conceding that error and bias can creep in, nevertheless it seems that some statements, such as the doctrines of the church, can be stated fully and accurately in a given context. This has implications for Lonergan's view of doctrine (Section 5.2.2.6). Criticism of this view is discussed below.

[67] Ramsey, *Models and Mystery*, 44.
[68] Lonergan, *Method*, 55.
[69] Lonergan, *Method*, 67.
[70] Lonergan, *Method*, 75-6.

4.3.1 The Inner and Outer Word

Lonergan provides an interpretation of the Thomist theory of language, in particular inner and outer words in *Verbum*.[71] For Lonergan, 'inner word' or 'word' is a synonym for the Thomist *verbum interius*, *verbum cordis*, *verbum mentis* and *verbum*. Outer words are spoken, written, imagined or meant. 'They are sounds with a meaning'. The inner word is the efficient cause of the outer, and it is what is immediately meant by the outer. Outer words mean inner words – we speak of 'man' or 'triangle' and are talking directly of objects of thought. Indirectly, of course, as far as our inner words have objective reference, we are talking of real things.[72] Thus Lonergan seems to solve the problem of reference: the word we speak refers to the inner word; outer words can be true, false or abstract. Real things are not. But the outer word refers to the inner word as its immediate reference.[73]

Inner words correspond to realities while outer words are products of custom and convention. Outer words thus vary between peoples, and there is no one-to-one correspondence between inner and outer words. Further, Lonergan suggests that the correspondence between inner word and reality is like a function to its derivative. The inner word is not a particular case, but refers to all from a higher viewpoint.

The inner word is of two sorts in Aquinas, definitions and judgments. It corresponds to reality, which divides into essence and existence. Essence relates to a definition while existence relates to a judgment. I can define a unicorn, but not judge that it exists. The inner word is an object of thought, a known product. An inventor comes to know what could become reality. They can move from the properties of uranium to an atomic bomb. Principles are known, an end is envisaged. The principles are applied to obtain the end, and this leads to a plan of operation.

In and through the inner word intellect comes to knowledge of things. The first act of intellect is 'what is it?' This is neither true nor false. The second act of intellect is judgment: 'is it so?' As the inner word mediates between the outer word and the realities meant, so it also mediates between the intellect and the things understood. An inner word is necessary for the Thomist act of *intelligere*, which Lonergan translates as 'understanding'. The inner word emerges at the end of the process of inquiry, Lonergan's cognitive process, at the end of our thinking in order to understand. It emerges from understanding; it is not understanding itself, but the content of the act of understanding.

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[71] Jordan provides a helpful summary: M. D. Jordan, *Ordering Wisdom: The Hierarchy of Philosophical Discourses in Aquinas*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), 32-3.
[72] Lonergan, *Verbum*, 13-5.
[73] Fitzpatrick, *Philosophical Encounters*, 218-9.

Lonergan's interpretation of Aquinas is not above criticism, at least from a historical viewpoint. Both Jenkins and Jordan suggest that Lonergan's views are not entirely correct, at least in interpreting exactly what Aquinas meant in his historical context.[74] Both concede, however, that while Lonergan sticks closely to Thomas' text, his interests are not strictly historical. Lonergan wishes to develop Thomas for his own cognitive theory. For the purposes of this work we can leave these criticisms aside.

The two acts of intellect that Lonergan describes correspond to the concepts and judgement in his cognitional process. A concept's truth or falsity is not decided at this point. That waits until the judgement stage. We can, of course, describe our concept using outer words, as we can also, in due course, describe our judgment upon it. We can say 'I think the integral of x is x^2', and later refine this 'The correct integral of x is $\frac{1}{2} x^2+c$'. The original concept is judged to be false and is refined by a further insight, but both may be spoken.

4.3.2 Meaning

Lonergan argues that knowledge is the term of intelligent and reasonable inquiry into experience. Thus knowledge is of reality.[75] Lonergan's theory of knowledge grounds his theory of language.[76] There is a correspondence between reality and words, and this correspondence is an isomorphic relation. There is difference as well as similarity between our inner and outer words. Words and concepts do not line up directly with insights. The reader has to catch on to what the author means. Meaning has its source in knowing and knowing has its source in the cognitive process.[77]

For Lonergan, words are just marks on a page or compressions and rarefactions in the air. Authors and readers mean, that is, they imbue the words with meaning. Writing or speaking is an effort to explain what we mean. The advance of knowledge implies the development of language. Words belong in patterns; we learn a language, first, by grasping these patterns. Then they become second nature, allowing us to concentrate on higher levels of meaning. The writer does not think of the meaning of each word. The meanings are grounded in insight. The insights link words with each other and with terms and sources of meaning.[78]

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[74] J. I. Jenkins, *Knowledge and Faith in Thomas Aquinas*, (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ Press, 2007), 107-11; Jordan, *Ordering Wisdom*, 31-39.
[75] H. Meynell, 'Lonergan, Wittgenstein, and Where Language Hooks onto the World', in *Creativity and Method: Essays in Honor of Bernard Lonergan S.J.*, ed. M. L. Lamb (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1981), 369-381, 374.
[76] J. Flanagan, 'Knowing and Language in the Thought of Bernard Lonergan', in *Language, Truth and Meaning*, ed. P. McShane (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1972), 49-78, 49.
[77] Flanagan, 'Knowing and Language', 65-6.
[78] Lonergan, *Insight*, 577.

A word can occur in a sentence that is affirmed. It has a basic reference to being, the real. Language develops with knowledge, and so the meaning of words depends not only upon the 'metaphysical matrix' of meaning, but on experiential sources of meaning. Knowing and stating that knowledge are distinguishable but inseparable. What is known, what is meant and what is said can be distinguished, but the distinction reveals different aspects of the same thing.[79]

There are sources, acts and terms of meaning. Sources lie in the experiential, intellectual and rational levels of knowing. Principle acts of meaning are constituted by defining, supposing, or assenting or dissenting. Instrumental acts are sensible meanings, gesture, speech and writing. Terms of meaning are what are meant. These form a universe of meaning, including being, suppositions and false affirmations and negations.

The expression of meaning may have its source in the experience of the speaker, ordered sets of experiences such as a song, an intelligently ordered and reflectively tested set of elements, as in a statement of fact, and in additional acts, such as commands. The response of the hearer or reader may similarly be on the experiential level alone, on the level of experience and insight, on the levels of experience, insight and judgement, or on these three levels plus decision.[80]

We can thus distinguish four levels of meaning related to the stages of the cognitive process: experience, insight, judgment, decision. We can refer to these as the common sense, theory, interiority and transcendent realms.[81] This does not mean that in the common sense realm of meaning the only cognitive activity is experience. Understanding, judging and deciding also take place, but they are related to the concrete at this level. In a sense, the cognitive process at the level of common sense requires the concrete to complete it. The world of theory systematises common sense. For example, mass and temperature are not objects in the realm of common sense. Mass is not weight or momentum. Metal objects at the same temperature as wooden objects can feel colder.[82] Each realm of meaning uses a different language.

The realms of common sense and theory are 'outer' realms. They confront us, however, with questions they cannot solve: what am I doing when I am knowing? Why is doing that knowing? What do I know when I do it? To answer these we turn to our interiority, ourselves as subject, our operations, their structure, norms and potentialities. From this we can return to the

[79] Lonergan, *Insight*, 578-9.
[80] Lonergan, *Insight*, 592.
[81] Lonergan, *Method*, 78-82.
[82] Lonergan, *Method*, 79-80.

realms of theory and common sense with a transcendental method which yields a tool for the analysis of common sense and the construction of the methods of science.[83]

The transcendental realm is that in which God is known and loved. It is a response to the unrestricted demand for intelligibility, the quest for the unconditioned and the non-finite good which arise from the other levels. Lonergan regards the process of grasping the levels, of heightening our awareness of them, as differentiation of consciousness. This is not to say that the unity of a human consciousness is divided, but that it is aware of the realms and can shift between them. A zoologist can talk to their child about a giraffe at a zoo with its long neck, and with colleagues about the evolutionary advantages of developing a long neck.[84] The meaning of 'giraffe' is different in the different cases. The son sees a neck, head, body and legs and observes a giraffe. The zoologist as a zoologist sees various interdependent systems, cells, ecological niche. Science sees the giraffe as one thing and the child sees it as another. One is the realm of theory, the other that of common sense and we cannot be in both realms simultaneously.[85]

Smith observes that, in Lonergan's understanding, religious language, as all language, operates in one realm at a time, and that religious expression means different things in different realms.[86] Thus 'God created the world in six days' in a common sense realm can be understood literally. In the realm of theory we start to conceive what the meaning of the term 'day' might be for the author. What is meant in one realm is not the same as what is meant in another. Thus, for example, literalists and theorists often talk past each other.[87]

A number of problems have been suggested with Lonergan's ideas of language and meaning. Firstly, Pannenberg argues that Lonergan thinks that meaning is constituted by decision.[88] The result is a combination of subjectivism and authority, and Lonergan is open to the charge that meaning is in the power of the individual.[89] Mathews defends Lonergan, who observes that language moulds developing consciousness and structures the world around the subject.[90] For Lonergan the individual is incarnated in a social context, and theological work is carried out in a community. Pannenberg's view does seem to need nuancing here.

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[83] Lonergan, *Method*, 80.
[84] B. J. F. Lonergan, 'Time and Meaning', in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958 - 1964*, ed. R. C. Croken, F. E. Crowe, and R. M. Doran (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1996), 94 - 121, 112.
[85] Lonergan, *Method*, 81-2. M. Smith, 'Religious Language and Lonergan's Realms of Meaning', *Sophia* 25, 1 (1986), 19-29, 23.
[86] Smith, 'Religious Language', 25.
[87] Smith, 'Religious Language', 27.
[88] W. Pannenberg, 'History and Meaning in Bernard Lonergan's Approach to Theological Method', in *Looking at Lonergan's Method*, ed. P. Corcoran (Dublin: Talbot Press, 1975), 88-100, 98.
[89] F. Kerr, 'Objections to Lonergan's Method', *New Blackfriars* 56, 662 (1975), 305-316, 308.
[90] Mathews, 'Lonergan's Awake', 17-8. Lonergan, *Method*, 68.

Torrance observes that Lonergan seems to use 'word' in different senses. Lonergan argues that love precedes knowledge, and that God pours his love into our hearts (Rom 5:5). Faith is thus the state of being in love and this love leads us to seek knowledge of God.[91] The love flooding our hearts by the Holy Spirit is precognitive. Knowledge arises by reflecting on this in the real world. In the general sense, Lonergan uses 'word' as any carrier of religious meaning or value.[92] This is an 'outer' word. This is contrasted with the 'inner' word which is pre-linguistic. Lonergan speaks of the word of God as both inner and outer words – an inner grace and the outer word which is Christ. That outer word is authoritative doctrine.[93] However, 'by its word, religion enters into the world mediated by meaning and regulated by value'.[94] Here word is used in its sense of an expression of religious meaning or value. But, Torrance argues, Lonergan insists that the outer word is constitutive, endowing the world with its deepest meaning and highest value.

Kelly also questions Lonergan's view of the inner and outer word. The prior, inner, word is of love and grace; the outer word of religious expression. The inner word is mystical, where image, symbol thought and word can even disappear.[95] If these disappear, Kelly wonders, what happened to incarnation and sacrament?[96]

The outer word is constitutive, historically conditioned, the word of tradition, fellowship, Gospel. This somehow complements the inner word. Kelly wonders what the relation of the Incarnate Word with the outer word of religious expression is. Lonergan says that the outer word has a specific meaning: 'the word of God himself'.[97] Kelly notes that this is a 'zone of unique data dealing with the presence of God amongst men in human history'. But Lonergan ducks the adjustment theological method might need and leaves questions of revelation, inspiration, developments, authority, schism and heresy to theologians.[98]

There are some grounds for confusion here. Lonergan is using 'word' in multiple ways. Firstly, he is using 'word' as indicative of the psychological process in humans – our inner word. Secondly, he is using it in the sense of the precognitive pouring of the love of God into our hearts, the inner word of God which is love. This is understood using the psychological analogy

[91] T. F. Torrance, 'The Function of Inner and Outer Word in Lonergan's Theological Method', in *Looking at Lonergan's Method*, ed. P. Corcoran (Dublin: Talbot Press, 1975), 101-126, 112.
[92] Lonergan, *Method*, 108.
[93] Lonergan, *Method*, 278.
[94] Lonergan, *Method*, 108.
[95] Lonergan, *Method*, 108.
[96] A. Kelly, 'Is Lonergan's Method Adequate to Christian Mystery?', *The Thomist* 39, 3 (1975), 437-470, 449.
[97] Lonergan, *Method*, 115.
[98] Kelly, 'Lonergan's Method', 451; Lonergan, *Method*, 115.

Lonergan taught.[99] Thirdly, he is using it in terms of the Word, that is, Christ who authoritatively speaks the outer word of doctrine.[100] Our words are historically conditioned outwardly spoken words, dependent on contact for meaning.[101] God has personally entered history; he communicates with His people through Israel and Christianity. The outer word of religious tradition comes from God, as does the inner word of God's gift of his love.[102]

Torrance identifies some difficulties for Lonergan. Lonergan's 'intellectualist' reinterpretation of Aquinas distinguishes two sources of knowledge, senses and our intellects.[103] Augustinian-Thomist thought operates with the principle that there is nothing in the mind that was not first in the senses; this leads to a dualism whereby God is immutable and impassible and separate from the contingent, transient world. Lonergan compounds this by reinforcing interiority and thus requiring a realm of causal grace between God and the world.[104] The problem is then that the intermediate word of God, which Lonergan grounds on the nature of human understanding, is applied to God who is undifferentiated.[105] But the Word as word is consubstantial with God. Lonergan cannot adequately relate God's being to His act. With this view, and lacking an adequate doctrine of the Holy Spirit, Lonergan is forced into a static analogy between the invariant structure of human self-understanding and its created participation in the intellectual substance of God. Dynamism is an attribute for Lonergan of the human mind; God remains impassible and immutable.

It can probably be conceded that this is a fair criticism. Lonergan does not seem to have a well worked out doctrine of the Holy Spirit, nor of how God may otherwise act in the world. Often it seems that for Lonergan the role of the Holy Spirit is to be the love of God poured out in our hearts. God's activity in the world is thus confined to those who are converted religiously, and who constitute the church. However, further discussion is beyond the scope of this thesis.

4.3.3 Analytical Philosophy

Another criticism aimed at Lonergan's account of language and meaning is that he fails to engage with the later Wittgenstein. Kerr jokes that *Insight* was published in 1957 and *Philosophical Investigations* in 1953, so there was not enough time for the significance of the latter to reach Rome. This is a little unfair, as *Insight* was finished in 1953 when Lonergan

[99] B. J. F. Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 135-43.
[100] John 1:1.
[101] Lonergan, *Method*, 108.
[102] Lonergan, *Method*, 115.
[103] Lonergan, *Verbum*, 76.
[104] Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*.
[105] Torrance, 'Inner and Outer Word', 119-20.

moved to Rome.[106] Nevertheless, Lonergan's later writings do not show much interaction with Wittgenstein. A number of critics and defenders have sought to remedy this defect.

Lonergan quotes MacKinnon as acknowledging that Wittgenstein shows that meaningful language is public and only derivatively private.[107] Otherwise language could not be used for intersubjective communication. Meaning is given by use; it is not explicable by private mental acts. MacKinnon argues that scholastics think that words have meaning because they express concepts which are private mental acts. Meanings are in concepts, private mental acts and only derivatively in language expressing the concept.

Lonergan responds in four points. First, mental acts occur in a flow of expression. This flow may not be linguistic or adequate, but it exists. Secondly, Lonergan concedes that ordinary meaningfulness of ordinary language is public and derivatively private. Language in common use has to be understood by a group. He observes that when we learn a language we develop private knowledge of ordinary usage. Third, Lonergan notes that language develops; new uses for words are found, new words created and the inventions are diffused. A new usage or invention is a mental act, which is tried out and refined in public. This original meaningfulness is grounded in mental acts and is communicated and refined through expressed mental acts and becomes ordinary when the perfected communication is understood by a group.

Lonergan distinguishes ordinary and original meaningfulness. These are often confused, and behind that lurks further confusion. Two meanings can be given to the statement that all philosophic problems are linguistic problems. If language is the expression of mental acts then philosophical problems are also in mental acts. If mental acts are thought to be occult entities then philosophic discourse should be limited to ordinary language. Then the meaningfulness of language cannot be given by its originating mental acts. The failure to distinguish ordinary and original meaningfulness is an oversight, and on this basis it can be maintained that the meaningfulness of language is essentially public. The differences between Lonergan and Wittgenstein seem to be related to the former being interested in originality while the latter focusses on ordinariness and tradition.[108]

Lonergan's response to MacKinnon seems to run the risk of undermining Lonergan's position on language and meaning. In distinguishing ordinary and original meaningfulness, and

[106] W. Mathews, *Lonergan's Quest: A Study of Desire in the Authoring of Insight*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 452.
[107] Lonergan, *Method*, 238-41. E. MacKinnon, 'Linguistic Analysis and the Transcedence of God', *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 23 (1968), 28-44, 30.
[108] C. Friel, 'Lonergan and Wittgenstein on the Dialectic of Methods', *New Blackfriars* 98, 1077 (2017), 555-566, 556-7.

conceding that ordinary meaningfulness is essentially public, Lonergan may be risking ordinary meaningfulness becoming detached from its immediate reference. Further, originality often seems to arise from the juxtaposition of two areas of discourse at any level, and not always from inventing new words or new uses for old words. He might have done better to avoid this distinction and reply that the data of consciousness indicates that mental acts do occur and that these are the basis of meaning, both ordinary and original.

Both Wittgenstein and Lonergan oppose the Cartesian project as an intellectual error.[109] They differ over mental processes, the "turn to the subject" and their interiority. For Lonergan the rules of human language emerge from human intelligence as confronted by life.[110] Wittgenstein sees language as being external rules governed by social institutions. Human knowledge is by necessity bound to language and social conditions.[111] Lonergan does not disagree but emphasises the contribution of mental processes in finding what to say. A genius is not bound by linguistic and social conventions. According to Fitzpatrick, in Wittgenstein's scheme it is hard to see how correctness of intellectual argument could be established, how new and original contributions could be made to knowledge by individuals, and how Wittgenstein would account for error and insincerity.[112]

4.3.4 Conclusion

Lonergan's view of meaning derives from his cognitional process and encompasses four levels – common sense, theory, interiority and transcendental. However, he does not distinguish between different sorts of language. Thus theology and mathematics both reside on the level of theory, but Lonergan does not explain how or whether they interact. We cannot be in more than one level of meaning at a time, but that does not explain that we cannot discourse on theology and physics at the same time. Thus Lonergan's account of meaning does not yield an understanding of how we avoid category mistakes.

Overall, Lonergan's ideas of meaning are helpful and useful, but do not really answer some of the criticisms of linguistic analysis, nor some of the more theological concerns raised by his critics. Some of these issues have to be allowed to stand or reserved for further development of his positions. As Lonergan's work is complex and the parts are interrelated and related to his conceptual process, this is no easy task.

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[109] Lonergan, *Insight*, 184; A. Stroll, *Wittgenstein*, (Oxford: Oneworld, 2002), 117-9.
[110] J. Fitzpatrick, 'Lonergan and the Later Wittgenstein', *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 10, 1 (1992), 27 - 50, 48-9.
[111] T. Labron, *Wittgenstein and Theology*, (London: T & T Clark, 2009), 30.
[112] Fitzpatrick, 'Lonergan and the Later Wittgenstein', 46.

4.4 The Hybrid Language Model

Ramsey's and Lonergan's ideas on language and meaning can complement each other. Lonergan's four levels of meaning and Ramsey's idea of an overall language map with different sub-languages are not exclusive. If we accept that each sub-language can exist at the different levels of Lonergan's meaning, and that the boundaries at each level need careful navigation using Ramsey's key words and models, then the two views can be integrated. Thus discourse about physics and theology can exist as different sub-languages at the level of theoretical meaning, as long as we recall the difficulties of navigating the boundary between them.

Ramsey introduces the concepts of metaphor and models into his understanding of language. This has no direct parallel in Lonergan's thought. Ramsey understands that language cannot completely capture experience and any description at any level must remain incomplete. Lonergan seems to disagree. We have traced this disagreement from their different views of the roles of models in science. Models in science, according to Ramsey, enable us to be articulate about a complex situation. Models in theology have a similar role. Lonergan thinks that the upper blade in both theology and science consists of a set of propositions, either dogmatic or mathematical in form, where the link to reality is formed by the lower blade of empirical data, setting the boundary conditions of a specific problem.

As with scientific method, Lonergan's view of language is improved if a place is found within his scheme for models and metaphors. A model in science mediates between theory and reality,[113] and hence sits between the common sense and theory levels of Lonergan's levels of meaning. In language things are a little more complex as metaphors pervade our discourse.[114] Lonergan's levels of meaning can be augmented by seeing each pair of levels as mediated partly by metaphors and models, as well as discourse within a level being partly achieved by metaphor and model.

Lonergan's levels of meaning are helpful in reminding us that we do speak in different ways. Much discourse is in the realm of common sense. A great deal of science and theology are at the level of theory and we need to be aware of moving between the levels. Ramsey reminds us that within a given level we can still mix our languages, an example being the doctrine of creation and cosmology or evolution at the level of theory. This navigation between sub-languages of a level of meaning needs care.

Lonergan does not really specify how we move from one level to another; often this is done unconsciously. However, we must have consciously moved from discussing the long neck of a

[113] Morgan and Morrison, 'Models as Mediating Instruments'.
[114] See G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

giraffe to the evolutionary advantages of that neck at some point, and this transition from one level to another can be hard. There is also a struggle in moving from the levels of common sense and theory to that of interiority, perhaps exemplified by the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, who also uses a metaphor to help the reader make the transition.[115] Ramsey's ideas of model and metaphor added to Lonergan's levels of meaning enables mediation between levels, as well as between and within sub-languages at each level.

The result of adding Ramsey's ideas about language to Lonergan's about meaning to that we obtain a more complex but more comprehensive model of how language and meaning work. To understand scientific or theological discourse, we have to be able to recognise the limitations of the levels at which we work, the boundaries between sub-languages at that level, and how we can navigate between them, often using metaphors and models.

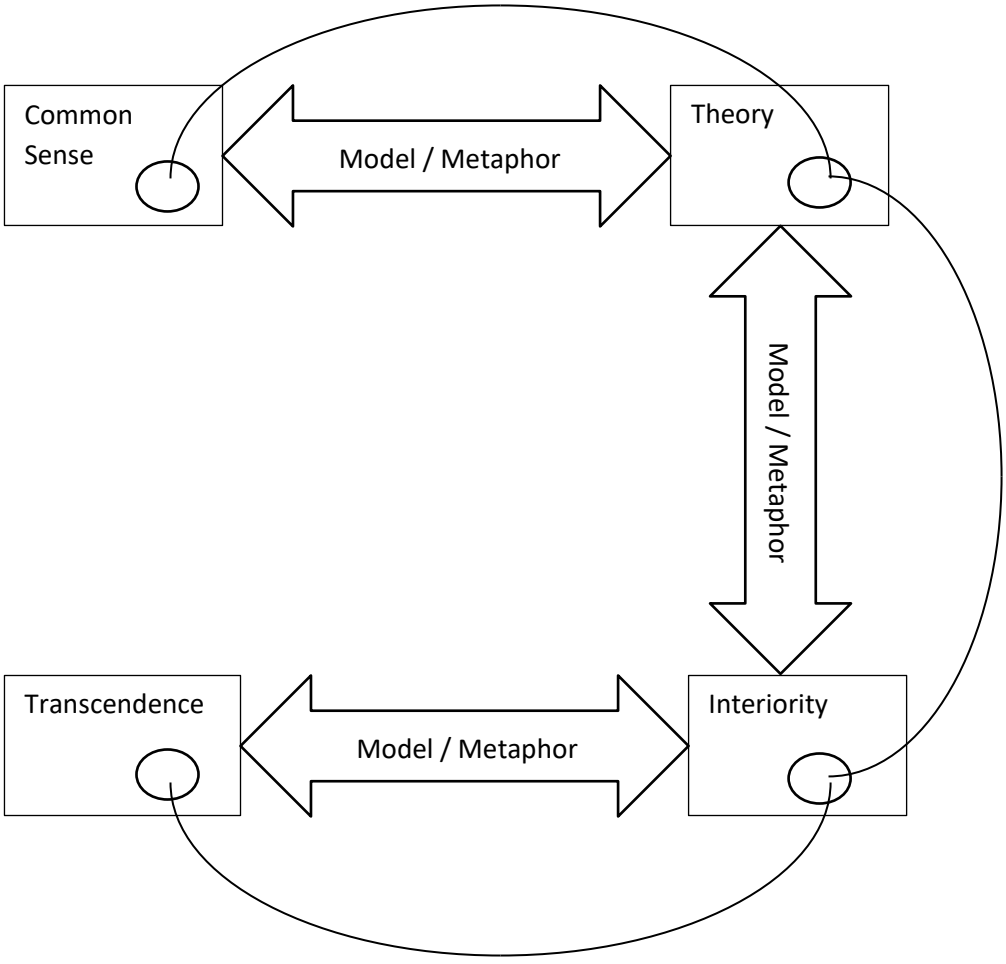

Figure 4.1: The Hybrid Language Model

[115] *The Cloud of Unknowing*, (London: Penguin, 1961), 58.

Figure 4.1 shows this hybrid language model. The labelled squares represent Lonergan's levels of meaning, linked by Ramsey's models and metaphors (although it is not implied that models and metaphors are the only ways of transitioning between levels). The ovals represent one of Ramsey's sub-languages, linked together across levels of meaning by the arcs. The figure is simplified; there are many sub-languages at each level, and it is also possible to move from the level of common sense, for example, to that of interiority without passing through theory.

We have suggested above that scientific method is a model which enables us to be articulate about how we undertake science. We noted Polanyi's point that we know more than we can say, and Polkinghorne's that no description of scientific method is complete. This suggests that scientific method links the levels of interiority and theory. A method is a model, and that model is incomplete but allows discourse on how we do science. In this sense the model of scientific method yields a grammar for discussion of how science is done. The scientist knows how to do science, but cannot necessarily state all of the operations of science explicitly.

In a similar way, a theological method also yields a grammar for discussing how theology is done. A theological method is a model of doing theology, and fits between the levels of interiority and theory. A theological method therefore enables discussion of how theology is undertaken. We will discuss later Lonergan's explicit and Ramsey's implicit theological methods (Chapter 5), how they go about theology (Chapter 6) and how this relates to the grammar of theological method and to a more general theological method (Chapter 7). We note that discussing doing theology is not the same as doing theology, in the same way as discussing doing science is not doing science. The discussing and doing interact, but are not the same.

Davis remarks that Lonergan seems to forget the limitations of human thought and language.[116] Ramsey is much closer to the later Wittgenstein in suggesting that we are bound by, but not trapped in, language. We cannot express ourselves or our experiences exactly. Language, such as a doctrine, does have an objective reference, mediating the mystery to the subject, but the mystery remains a mystery. This limitation on human language can be added to Lonergan's levels of meaning as we recall that, for example, our doctrine of redemption does not refer to the mechanics of redemption but to ways of our understanding it.

The acceptance of these limitations of language does not change our hybrid language model, but it does add more constraints to our understanding of what we are talking about. With difficulties of transferring from one level of meaning to another, navigating the boundaries of

[116] Davis, 'Response to Hefling', 287.

sub-levels at each level of meaning and limitations within each sub-language, it is perhaps unremarkable that we struggle at times to use language in appropriate ways. Ramsey draws attention to this problem in ways which do not seem to have been part of Lonergan's thinking.

4.5 Conclusion

Ramsey's and Lonergan's views on language are different but compatible. Combining them provides a more powerful model of how language, particularly religious language, works. To Lonergan's levels of meaning we have added Ramsey's concept of sub-languages on a language map, which avoids the problem of category mistakes. Lonergan's levels avoid problems associated with confusion between, for example, common sense speaking and theory. The levels are mediated in part by Ramsey's ideas about models and metaphors. We suggest that as models in science mediate experiment and theory, so metaphors more widely can mediate between levels of meaning.

Lonergan does not pay much attention to the functions of language and how it works, but does attend to meaning and its different levels. Ramsey explores in some depth the functions and working of language, paying less attention to the different levels of meaning. This is why we can hybridise their views. Lonergan's views are open to the charge of permitting category mistakes, describing one thing in terms of another. He cannot, in principle (although he would in practice), rule out a direct discussion of the doctrine of creation in terms of Darwinian evolution. These both take place on the level of theory and, in Lonergan's view of language, are discussed in homogenous language. Ramsey's addition of sub-languages avoids this problem, indicating that the boundaries need to be carefully navigated.

Ramsey's view of language, however, cannot distinguish easily between the different levels of meaning. Specifically, for Ramsey an experience is an experience, and he cannot distinguish between a hallucination and a sensory experience. Lonergan's levels of meaning can do this, at least in Doran's extension to include a psychic level before that of common sense.[117] Lonergan's levels of meaning prevent us from discussing the literal seven days of creation at the same time as Big Bang cosmology; it indicates that we need to look again at the literal creation and understand it before discussing the two at the level of meaning of theory where they are comparable (again, with care regarding the sub-language boundaries).

[117] B. J. F. Lonergan, 'Reality, Myth, Symbol', in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965 - 1980*, ed. R. C. Croken and R. M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 384-90, 390. See, among a large literature, for example, R. M. Doran, 'Psychic Conversion and Lonergan's Hermeneutics', in *Lonergan's Hermeneutics: Its Development and Application*, ed. S. E. McEvenue and B. F. Meyer (Washingto D. C.: Catholic University of America, 1989). and R. M. Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1990), 149 - 352. Doran's earlier works on the subject are referenced in footnote 13 (p. 390) in Lonergan's article.

Our hybrid model of language helps us in summarising the work of both Ramsey and Lonergan on language and meaning, and visualising the compatibility between the two. The hybrid language model enables us to see how we can avoid category mistakes and confusions between levels of meaning which have, over the years, bedevilled some of the discourse between science and theology. As such, the hybrid language model, particularly as applied to the problem of theological method, underpins much of the work in the rest of the thesis.

5 Method

5.1 Introduction

We have seen that Lonergan and Ramsey broadly agree over scientific method (Chapter 2) and human intentional cognitive process (Chapter3). However, it has been shown that they disagree rather significantly, although not incompatibly, over language and its use (Chapter 4), and we have suggested that this may impact on how the two authors see Christian doctrines.

In this chapter we turn to their methods of doing theology. Lonergan's theological method is based on his cognitive process. This was preceded by explorations of method, and we start with one of these, *De Intellectu et Methodo* (DiM), which is relevant to the next chapter. The bulk of the discussion of Lonergan's method will be devoted to a description of that found in *Method in Theology* and critiques of it.

Ramsey, in contrast, had no explicit theological method. We argue here that he did have a method and did use it consistently across his theological writings. It is unfortunate that there has been little or no engagement with Ramsey's theology (as opposed to his philosophy of religion and religious language) and hence no engagement with his theological method.

The third major section of the chapter will compare Lonergan's and Ramsey's methods. We find that there is some overlap between both of Lonergan's methods described, and Ramsey's approach. The methods are, on the whole, complementary, although we find firstly that Ramsey's method is a description of how he did theology, which is inevitable given it is implicitly derived from his theological writings, as opposed to Lonergan's approach which is a theoretically based guide. Secondly, we find that Ramsey attends to the posing of the theological question, which Lonergan seems to omit. Thus the methods can be seen to complement each other although significant differences remain.

5.2 Lonergan's Method in Theology

Lonergan's theological method had a lengthy gestation period, which is documented in three volumes of the *Collected Works*.[1] His 'breakthrough', which yielded the functional specialties, occurred in 1965, but ill-health slowed development.[2] An early version of what became Chapter 5 of *Method in Theology* was published in 1969, and much of the initial comment on

[1] B. J. F. Lonergan, *Early Works on Theological Method 1*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010); B. J. F. Lonergan, *Early Works on Theological Method 3*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013); B. J. F. Lonergan, *Early Works on Theological Method 2*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

[2] W. Mathews, 'A Biographical Perspective on Conversion and the Functional Specialties in Lonergan', *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 16, 2 (1998), 133-60, 136. I. Coelho, *Hermeneutics and Method: The 'Universal Viewpoint' in Bernard Lonergan*, (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2012), 139-40.

his method is based on this work.[3] *Method in Theology* itself was published in 1972.[4] We shall focus here on the finished version of 1972, although some of the critique offered of the method was based on earlier versions. As we wish to compare Lonergan's writing on the atonement with his method, we will start by discussing an earlier method, *De Intellectu et Methodo* dating from 1959, which is roughly contemporaneous with his lecture on atonement and his manual on Redemption discussed in Chapter 6.

5.2.1 *De Intellectu et Methodo*: An Early Method[5]

Lonergan sets forth five general precepts for method, while conceding that they need adapting for a specific subject. He can do this because method is a unity because the human mind is one. The general precepts are: understand; understand systematically; reverse counter-positions; develop positions; accept responsibility for judgement.[6]

Understanding is an act, and, as we have discussed, the act lies between concrete perceptible and abstract concept. Understanding is determined by phantasms; the act of understanding is the insight. Concepts arise because we understand. Lonergan remarks that science initially seems to be in books, in statements, theorems and 'middle terms'. Later, we realise that science is in us; we achieve an intellectual habit.[7]

Lonergan's second precept is to understand systematically. By this he means aiming at complete explanation of all phenomena. This ideal is implicit, Lonergan says, in every enquiry. The role of method is to make the implicit explicit. Through systematic understanding the end is known, as well as the explication of the end.[8]

These precepts do not find a place in Lonergan's later functional specialties. It is likely they form part of the 'background' to his theological method. Systematic understanding arises gradually in history. The intelligibility of developing doctrines is that immanent in historical process.[9] Human inquiry demands intelligibility.[10] The dynamism of intentional consciousness heads for data, intelligibility, truth, reality and value. These ground the questions. Experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding develop the answers.[11]

[3] B. J. F. Lonergan, 'Functional Specialties in Theology', *Gregorianum* 50, 3 (1969), 485-505.
[4] Lonergan, *Method*.
[5] See also Boly, *Road to Lonergan's Method*, 115-63.
[6] Lonergan, *Theological Method 2*, 116-9.
[7] Lonergan, *Theological Method 2*, 127.
[8] Lonergan, *Theological Method 2*, 128-31.
[9] Lonergan, *Method*, 296.
[10] Lonergan, *Method*, 81.
[11] Lonergan, *Method*, 71.

The next two precepts in DiM are to reverse counter-positions and develop positions. True understanding is to be retained. Assertions need to be discerned; positions are coherent with systematic understanding; counter-positions are not. Incongruous elements are thus to be removed. Errors, Lonergan asserts, fall by the wayside.[12] Later, Lonergan argues that human authenticity is a withdrawal from inauthenticity and is ever precarious. Further mistakes can always be discovered and corrected. Development is through the resolution of conflicts, and conflicts are defined by opposed positions and counter positions.[13] This is the functional specialty of Dialectics (Section 5.2.2.4).

Finally, Lonergan observes that it is only with judgment that we arrive at the true. Judgment goes beyond understanding and is a virtually unconditioned.[14] It is personal; method does not absolve us of the responsibility for making a judgment. This does not mean that judgment is purely individual opinion. In theology, rules for judgement have to touch upon divine wisdom, and hence involve the category of mystery.

Precept	**Function**
Understand	Obtain insight
Understand systematically	Aim for complete explanation
Reverse counter-positions Develop positions	Remove incongruous elements
Accept responsibility for judgments	Arrive at the true: the virtually unconditioned

Table 5.1: Lonergan's *De Intellectu et Methodo*

We can see this exploration of theological method as situated between Lonergan's later method and his earlier work on cognitive process. Some of the precepts map onto later functional specialties; some are compressed forms of multiple functional specialties and others, such as understanding and judgment, are part of cognitive process. It is hard to claim that DiM is a complete method, but that was not Lonergan's purpose at this point. Murnion suggests that Lonergan aimed for a definitive format for dogmatic theology, not a definite theological method.[15] In Section 6.2 we will consider whether Lonergan's contemporaneous discussions of atonement follows this outline.

[12] Lonergan, *Theological Method 2*, 143.
[13] Lonergan, *Method*, 237.
[14] Lonergan, *Theological Method 2*, 147.
[15] W. E. Murnion, 'Lonergan's Incarnate Word and the Triune God: Experiments in Theological Method', *Lonergan Workshop* 22 (2011), 303-375, 349.

5.2.2 Method in Theology[16]

In the introduction to *Method*, Lonergan observes that 'theology mediates between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of a religion in that matrix'. Theology in a pluralist society is therefore an ongoing process, and thus its method can be written about. A theological method is not a set of rules for Lonergan, but outlines clusters of operations performed by theologians undertaking various tasks. Lonergan admits that his method is a model, but he does not think it is merely a model. He links it to his cognitive process and so claims that it is not open for radical revision.[17]

Lonergan divides the theological enterprise in two. The first phase mediates the past. Religions involve a message from the past transmitted through a community which has expressed its witness in a variety of ways. Secondly, the message is to be stated and applied to the present, in a mediated phase of theology.[18]

Each phase of the method consists of four functional specialties, and each functional specialty is related to one of the four levels of intentional consciousness. Lonergan notes that in everyday activity all four levels of consciousness are employed, but that each level has its proper end. Thus experiencing has at its proper end the apprehension of data, and understanding has insight.[19] The ends proper to each level become, in a scientific investigation, the objectives of a particular level, although the investigator uses all four levels of consciousness in achieving it. In each phase of theology Lonergan finds four proper ends and hence there are eight functional specialties.[20]

The basis on which Lonergan asserts that each functional specialty rests on a level of his cognitional process is unclear. Each step of the cognitional process is included in each functional specialty. Why the overall method should follow the order of cognition is not obvious. Lonergan's example of the textual critic operating on all four levels but with a goal of ascertaining the data for the interpreter does indicate that the operations at each level are different, but provides no justification for attaching the textual researcher's output to the first level of consciousness.[21] We have accepted Lonergan's cognitive process as a useful model of intentional thought; we find that accepting this as a basis for the ordering functional specialties in theology is more problematic.

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[16] From here on, so far as is possible, functional specialties will be designated by as capital letter; hence 'Doctrines' for the functional specialty, and 'doctrines' for the usual sense.
[17] Lonergan, *Method*, 3-4.
[18] Meynell, *Theology of Lonergan*, 14-5. Lonergan, *Method*, 129.
[19] Lonergan, *Method*, 128.
[20] Lonergan, *Method*, 128-9.
[21] Lonergan, *Method*, 128.

In Lonergan's mediating phase of theology the functional specialties are Research, Interpretation, History and Dialectic. These aim to examine and recover the past and present it to the present. They 'mediate an encounter with persons witnessing the Christ', and principally refer to the retrieval of the past.[22] The second phase, mediated theology consists of Foundations, Doctrines, Systematics and Communication. This phase concerns the present and the future.

	Functional Specialty	**Level of Consciousness**	**Functional Specialty**	
1	Research	Experiencing	Communications	8
2	Interpretation	Understanding	Systematics	7
3	History	Judging	Doctrines	6
4	Dialectic	Deciding	Foundations	5
	Mediating Phase		**Mediated Phase**	

Table 5.2: Lonergan's Functional Specialties and Method

Table 5.2 shows the functional specialties related to the levels of consciousness and the two phases of theology. Thus both Research and Communications relate to experience and data, the first in acquiring it, in terms of texts, critical evaluations and translations; the second to creating it in terms of books, theses and other forms of publication.

Lonergan conceives his functional specialties as distinct and separate stages in a single process from data to ultimate results. He wishes to distinguish different tasks and not confuse them. Different ends require different means. There are different theological tasks, and each requires a different set of methodological precepts. Without these, Lonergan says, investigators will not be sure what they are doing or what their short and longer term goals might be. Further, an overall method is required to curb 'one-sided totalitarian ambitions'. Each functional specialty requires the others. A researcher pursuing one might start to consider it to stand above the other seven, but a total method will guard against this. Finally, Lonergan argues that the division is needed to resist excessive demands. A historian does history, for example, and produces evidence relevant to history. The specialist needs to draw attention to their speciality.[23]

As the specialities develop, it becomes less possible for a single person to perform more than one of them. Thus, theology becomes a matter of teamwork. The specialties are interdependent, and this is straightforward in a single mind, but in a team there arise issues of relevance to other member's work and communication between team members. There is

[22] Lonergan, *Method*, 129. V. Gregson, 'Theological Method and Collaboration: I', in *The Desires of the Human Heart: An Introduction to the Theology of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. V. Gregson (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 74-91, 75.
[23] Lonergan, *Method*, 130-1.

reciprocal dependence between the two phases and between individual pairs of functional specialties. Doctrine, for example, requires a study of the history of a doctrine; the history of a doctrine requires the study of the doctrine itself.[24]

While McGuckian concedes that no individual can grasp all the detail of scholarship across all areas of interest to theology, they can acquire an overall view which 'corresponds to the faith of the Church'.[25] McGuckian considers that the theologian can be at home in Scripture, Patristics and more recent theologians. Part of Lonergan's point, however, is that theology must also be responsive to developments in other disciplines such as science, social science, history and philosophy. His method allows the data from other disciplines to be included.

Lonergan bases his theological method heavily on scientific method. In science, Lonergan argues, development is usually one jump ahead of method; performance happens first and then reflection. The reflections are pieced together to shape scientific method.[26] Scientific method is learnt in a community, and that community judges the validity of a breakthrough. He contrasts this with logic. Logic is static and its conclusions are implicit in the premises. Method is dynamic and cumulative. It turns out new results.[27]

For Lonergan, common sense, theory and method are all public. Scientific discoveries that are not published are unknown. Only by publication and scrutiny by a community do results have influence over subsequent investigation.[28] Further, for Lonergan there are four stages of meaning – common sense, theory, interiority and transcendence. These coexist. Thus the mode of common sense exists alongside that of theory, but the latter is controlled by logic. In the mode of interiority, common sense and theory co-exist alongside it, but science and philosophy are separate, and philosophy takes its stand on interiority.[29] This differentiation is temporal, in that the advance is from common sense to theory and then to interiority, but is not chronological, as the different modes can co-exist.

A further issue is with the relation of scientific method to method in any other discipline. Lonergan argues that natural science and history are both empirical. History, however, does not seek universal laws but seeks to understand words and deeds. The aim of history is to understand the common sense of another time and place. History, and thus other human

[24] Lonergan, *Method*, 134-7.
[25] M. McGuckian, 'The Role of Faith in Theology: A Critique of Lonergan's Method', *Irish Theological Quarterly* 71 (2006), 242-259, 254.
[26] Lonergan, 'Method: Trend and Variations', 10.
[27] Lonergan, 'Method: Trend and Variations', 13.
[28] Lonergan, 'The Ongoing Genesis of Methods', 145.
[29] Lonergan, *Method*, 82.

sciences, cannot then adopt their method solely from natural science.[30] To do so omits the world mediated by meaning and motivated by value.[31] Science might model method but scientific method cannot be applied across disciplines.

Authenticity in the world mediated by meaning and value cannot be taken for granted. The data may be a mix of authentic and inauthentic and the investigation may be biased. We need a hermeneutic of both suspicion and recovery. A dialectic of history can analyse cycles of both progress and decline, as well as specific issues where historians disagree.[32] What we do not find, however, is a dialectic in history or theology which might relate to a dialectic in science. Inauthentic results do occur in science, but the method of dealing with them is not through a strictly dialectic process, but through checking results, repeating experiments and derivations and redoing the work.

McGuckian questions the basis of Lonergan's method. Lonergan, McGuckian claims, is dismissive of the role of dogma as foundational in theology.[33] He also notes that Lonergan claims that theological method is neutral.[34] For Lonergan, the methodologist leaves theology to theologians.[35] The theologian, McGuckian argues, is a committed Christian and baptised into a community of faith. The research they do is thus dependent on this commitment and community. If the researcher is not a Christian they are not undertaking Christian theology.

McGuckian notes that the data for research is determined in Lonergan's method before the functional specialty of Doctrines is reached, but the canon of Scripture the theologian uses is decided by their confessional commitment.[36] Different traditions have different canons as a result of confessional commitments; this is a matter of confessional doctrine. These differences cannot be set aside by Lonergan's assertion that the 'method is designed to take care of the matter.'[37]

Dogmatic theology is, for McGuckian, foundational and necessary. The faith of the Church demands that it is done successfully, and Lonergan declares that it is a complex task which can be achieved using theological method.[38] Lonergan asserts that the second phase of method must not undermine either the openness to all data or the results of the first phase.

[30] Lonergan, *Method*, 207; Lonergan, 'The Ongoing Genesis of Methods', 149.
[31] Lonergan, 'The Ongoing Genesis of Methods', 150.
[32] Lonergan, 'The Ongoing Genesis of Methods', 152.
[33] McGuckian, 'Role of Faith', 250.
[34] McGuckian, 'Role of Faith', 251-2.
[35] B. J. F. Lonergan, 'Bernard Lonergan Responds', in *Foundations of Theology*, ed. P. McShane (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1971), 223-234, 232.
[36] McGuckian, 'Role of Faith', 253.
[37] Lonergan, *Method*, 143.
[38] Lonergan, 'Theology in Its New Context', 53.

McGuckian objects that the approach to Scripture (as data) is dogmatic. There is a challenge of matching dogma with historical-critical exegesis.[39]

Lonergan, McGuckian argues, changed his view of theology from starting from truth to starting from data. McGuckian wishes to reassert that systematic theology (the second of Lonergan's phases) reflects on the whole of revelation. Systematic theology works from within, not from a set of truths from without. McGuckian suggests that theology is different from other disciplines, in that the theologian knows the truth revealed by God already. Lonergan's first phase is not discovery but verification, clarification and purification of a truth already possessed. McGuckian argues that theology proceeds from the supernatural sense of the faith, constituted by the theologian's baptismal conversion.[40]

McGuckian is really objecting to Lonergan's switch of the foundations of theology. The older fundamental theology was of objective statements of truth and was deduced from these. It was, in Lonergan's terms, 'classicist'. The new foundation is empirical, founded in data, dynamic, flexible and adaptive.[41] This is the foundation of the theology outlined in *Method*, although Lonergan avoids discussion of the content of theology in that work. It can also be objected that Lonergan has not, in fact, outgrown classicism.[42] Parts of *Method* appear to be based around the idea that the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church is foundational, and this appears to be a return to the classical theology of objective statements.

McGuckian starts from the position that we already know the truths of the faith, as these are defined by our faith community. Thus, it seems, nothing particularly new can be discovered in theology and, as noted, theology does not need to refer to anything other than itself and its history for its activities. Lonergan and Ramsey (and I) would politely disagree. Scripture and tradition say nothing about modern dilemmas, such as the relation of faith and science, or, more specifically, the ethics of genetic engineering or use of nuclear energy. A theology that cannot respond to such questions is a theology that is likely to become only less relevant to people of faith, let alone perform an apologetic role.

McGuckian does expose a tension in Lonergan's thinking between data and dogma. In science, at least in principle, theory and data proceed together, with data leading and verifying theoretical outcomes. Lonergan's theological method, however, while apparently data led, returns to traditional Roman Catholic doctrine as set forth by the First Vatican Council. Theologians, he claims, are autonomous but have to be responsible for the influence

[39] McGuckian, 'Role of Faith', 256.
[40] McGuckian, 'Role of Faith', 257-9.
[41] Coelho, *Hermeneutics and Method*, 141. Lonergan, 'Theology in Its New Context', 56.
[42] Shea, 'Stance and Task', 275.

theological doctrine has on church doctrine. This responsibility appears to be to allow church officials to defend church religion, whatever theology might say.[43]

McGuckian raised the question of the separation of theology and its method.[44] Dulles notes that Lonergan claims to write as a methodologist, not a theologian, but he accepts the authority of Vatican I. He provides no basis to accepting this authority and Dulles suggests this requires a view of Christology, revelation and church. Method and theology are interdependent.[45] Wiles also objects that the nature of revelation and the appropriate method in theology are interdependent and cannot be isolated.[46] Dulles and Wiles (and McGuckian) seem to be correct here. The way of doing theology is not completely separate from the theology itself.

To Kelly, the Christian component of Lonergan's method becomes 'almost an afterthought'.[47] Lonergan's is a general method and Kelly is unsure how it can be applied to a specifically Christian task.[48] Lonergan's method is grounded in transcendental method, the method behind all methods, and transcendental method is arrived at by examining the natural and human science of today.[49]

Kelly observes that Lonergan's method is a model of self-transcendence. He proceeds from experience and if that experience is of the intersubjectivity of Christ, a great deal more is demanded of theological method than self-transcendence. The outer word is subordinated to the inner and is the crystallisation of the gift of grace. For Kelly, the Christian component in Lonergan's thought on method is awkward, appearing to be the naming of an anonymous inner experience.[50] Lonergan's emphasis on self-transcendence suggests that the self-disclosure and self-gift of God are under-stressed instead of determinant.

Reynolds believes the criticisms of Lonergan's method by Dulles, Wiles and Kelly are essentially well founded.[51] For Reynolds, Lonergan's difficulties proceed from his two-fold movement. First, Lonergan has shown that the human mind inclines to self-transcendence and thus to religious awareness. Second, at the end of this chain is the love of God, and this is the divine catalyst driving us towards authenticity and understanding. The problem is that Lonergan has

[43] Lonergan, *Method*, 308.
[44] McGuckian, 'Role of Faith', 252.
[45] A. R. C. Dulles, 'Method in Theology', *Theological Studies* 33, 3 (1972), 553-555, 555.
[46] M. F. Wiles, 'Method in Theology', *Theology* 76, 631 (1973), 37-39, 38.
[47] Kelly, 'Lonergan's Method', 460.
[48] Kelly, 'Lonergan's Method', 468.
[49] Kelly, 'Lonergan's Method', 464-5.
[50] Kelly, 'Lonergan's Method', 455.
[51] T. Reynolds, 'Method Divorced from Content in Theology: An Assessment of Lonergan's Method in Theology', *The Thomist* 55, 2 (1991), 245-269, 269.

now introduced the theological category of grace into a methodology which is otherwise theologically content free.

The introduction of grace blurs Lonergan's boundary between his theological method and theology itself. If Lonergan thinks grace offers insights into the data of theology, this jeopardises the commonality of experience on which Lonergan's cognitive process is founded, as those without grace, or with an experience of grace different from Lonergan's concept here, presumably go without the insights. The universality of the method collapses and theology is a subject on its own. However, disregarding the nature of Christian apprehension does an injustice to the notion of grace. Grace, Reynolds thinks, is ambiguously defined in Lonergan's thought.[52]

It is possible that, as with Lonergan's concept of 'word', his understanding of grace can be clarified from other works. In fact, Lonergan's earliest published work (and his doctoral thesis) discussed the concept of operative grace in Aquinas.[53] Lonergan understands a two-fold grace. Aquinas identifies operative grace as sign of a willingness to do good where we were unwilling before.[54] Lonergan references Ezekiel 11:19-20, referring to an 'inner operative grace that plucks out hearts of stone and replaces them with hearts of flesh'. The outer grace is that of 'the Christian tradition that brings the gospel to our ears'.[55]

As it is with his use of the term 'word', Lonergan's various uses of 'grace' can cause confusion. By 'grace' Lonergan can mean either operative grace or cooperative grace. Operative grace is from God alone; cooperative grace is God drawing our goodness on. Further, Lonergan can mean inner grace, wherein God replaces our hearts of stone with flesh, or the outer grace of Christian tradition. There is scope here for confusion around exactly what Lonergan means when he uses the word in a given situation.

In his theological method Lonergan sees sanctifying grace as a dynamic state of otherworldly love. Acts of love proceed from this dynamic state. The data on this dynamic state are the inner determinants of God's gift of his love and our consent. The outer determinants are experience and religious tradition.[56]

By analogy with physics, Lonergan argues that theology and its method act as scissors. In physics the upper blade is mathematics and the lower blade is data (Section 2.2). The laws of

[52] Reynolds, 'Method Divorced from Content ', 264-5.
[53] Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*.
[54] T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1948), 1-2, q. 111, a2. Lonergan, 'Pope John's Intention', 226.
[55] Lonergan, 'Theology and Praxis', 190.
[56] Lonergan, *Method*, 271.

physics are neither mathematics nor data. Theology has the data of experience as the lower blade and theological categories as the upper. There are two sorts of category. General theological categories regard 'objects' that are within the range of other disciplines as well as theology. Special categories regard 'objects' proper to theology.[57] He views the methodologist's task being to indicate what qualities are desirable in the categories, what validity is required and how this might be achieved.

The answer to Reynold's criticism, therefore, seems to lie in Lonergan's view of the dynamism of human thought. The laws of physics are the result of dynamic interaction between mathematics and data. Theology is neither *a priori* nor *a posteriori* but the fruit of ongoing interaction between general and special categories and the data of personal and collective experience.[58] The content of theology and its method are not entirely separated, but linked as the blades of scissors are linked, or as the data and method of science are linked.

We have examined the general outline of Lonergan's method and it is now necessary to turn to a more detailed consideration of the functional specialties. Lonergan discusses these in part two of *Method in Theology*, titled 'Foreground', having already discussed cognitive process, the human good, meaning, religion and the outline of the functional specialties in part one, 'Background'.

5.2.2.1 Research

Research, which Lonergan subdivides into special and general, retrieves artefacts from the past via archaeology and gathers inscriptions and texts, translates them and prepares critical editions, bibliographies and dictionaries. The ability to do research is usually given by a form of apprenticeship to a master in a given area.[59] It is the basic building block upon which the rest of the mediating phase is built.

5.2.2.2 Interpretation

Interpretation takes the results of Research and understands what was meant, the meaning of the artefact or text in its original historical context. The product of this is the commentary or monograph. It is a matter of hermeneutics and exegesis. Lonergan regards the task of interpretation as a complex one. Deciding which interpretation is correct is, in itself, difficult. This has been compounded by the emergence of awareness of different cultures existent both now and in the past. Further, the human sciences regard interpretation as a fundamental task as meaning is a fundamental category. Third, Lonergan identifies confusion about knowing and

[57] Lonergan, *Method*, 274, 264.
[58] Lonergan, *Method*, 274.
[59] Lonergan, *Method*, 123, 141-4.

that leads to confusion about interpreting. Finally, modernity frees us from reliance on tradition and authority. We have detached ancient authors from their contexts and attempted to place them in post-Christian philosophy and attitudes.[60]

Lonergan's implementation of his method attempts to meet these problems not by accepting or rejecting modernity but by distinguishing the problems of hermeneutics from those of the other functional specialties.[61] The functional specialties are performed by the members of a theological community. Lonergan does not expect any individual to master all the eight stages.[62]

5.2.2.3 History

Lonergan divides history into basic, special and general. Basic history is the background of where, who and what happened. Special histories tell of cultural, institutional or doctrinal movements. General history is basic history illuminated by all the special histories and as such is an ideal.[63]

For Lonergan, history is about 'what was going forward'. For example, military history is interested in the opposing commanders' plans of battle, the experiences of the troops and also with the actual course of events, what happened as they attempted to execute the opposing plans. Contemporaries did not know what was going on; a general only has access to their own plans. History arrives at its conclusions from what has happened and thus differs from the natural sciences.[64]

Critical history has two phases of understanding. The first understands the sources, locating them in their time and place, the context of authorship and readers. The second is to understand 'the object to which they are relevant', that is the historical events to which the authors refer. These two phases are interwoven, although they are logically distinguishable.[65]

Lonergan remarked that his work had been to introduce history to theology.[66] This reveals a tension in Lonergan's thought, in that he believes that doctrine developed and was a response to the historical context in which theology developed, but he cannot afford to be seen to go

[60] Lonergan, *Method*, 147.
[61] Lonergan, *Method*, 147.
[62] Gregson, 'Theological Method and Collaboration: I', 75.
[63] Lonergan, *Method*, 124.
[64] Lonergan, *Method*, 168.
[65] Lonergan, *Method*, 177.
[66] F. E. Crowe, ''All My Work Has Been Introducing History into Catholic Theology'', *Lonergan Workshop* 10 (1994), 49-81, 49.

down a 'Modernist' route.[67] He has to claim that dogmas are both permanent and historical statements with a context.[68] As Hill notes, Lonergan's religious epistemology sometimes reduces to 'thus sayeth the church'.[69] Crowe tries to avoid the dilemma, arguing that dogmas are permanent while doctrines are the expression of dogma at a given place and time.[70] This blunts but does not resolve the dilemma; the relation of a permanent dogma to an ephemeral doctrine still has to be defined.

5.2.2.4 Dialectics

Dialectics deals with the contradictory aspects that arise in the history of Christianity. It aims to resolve these conflicts, studying the viewpoints of the proponents. Beyond the viewpoints, Lonergan argues that the reason for conflict can be found and it can be discovered where the differences are irreconcilable and where they are complementary. Here also is criticism. Not all reasons for a view are sound, and not all irreconcilable differences are important. The aim is a comprehensive viewpoint.[71]

Dialectic relates to the level of decision, and it is here that personal horizons play a part. Each person has a horizon and they may be complementary, as the horizon of a doctor and a lawyer, or at different stages in a process of development, or opposed. Lonergan argues that a new horizon can be achieved by an individual through an about face, which he terms a conversion.[72]

Lonergan identifies three conversions: intellectual, moral and religious. Intellectual conversion is the elimination of the myth that knowing is just like seeing. Moral conversion moves the criteria of decision from satisfactions to values, opting for the truly good instead of immediate satisfaction. Religious conversion is other-worldly falling in love. For Christians it is God's love flooding our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5).[73]

The conversions (or lack of them) present in both ourselves and in the views we seek to evaluate colour the results we obtain. Dialectic is the activity we undertake regarding the options the past and present have established, the results of the mediating phase of theology. As we study theology and the results of past theologians, we ourselves change and hopefully

[67] R. Muers and M. Higton, *Modern Theology: A Critical Introduction*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 242-4.
[68] Lonergan, *Method*, 302.
[69] S. Hill, 'Lonergan, Lyotard, and Lindbeck: Bringing Method in Theology into Dialogue with Postmodernity', *The Heythrop Journal* 58, 6 (2017), 908-916, 914.
[70] F. E. Crowe, 'Doctrines and Historicity in the Context of Lonergan's Method', *Theological Studies* 38, 1 (1977), 115-124, 117-8.
[71] Lonergan, *Method*, 124-5.
[72] Lonergan, *Method*, 222-3.
[73] Lonergan, *Method*, 223-6.

develop towards more authentic conversions. Dialectic stimulates personal growth and change.[74]

McKinney sees Lonergan's view of dialectic as inconsistent.[75] He identifies three uses of the term: dialectic as sublation, as complementarity and as contradiction. In the course of discussion with Hughes, McKinney modifies his position somewhat. Hughes maintains that Lonergan's notion of dialectic only pertains to human affairs and not to the universe in general, as McKinney argues.[76] Part of the argument turns on the relation of Lonergan's notions of dialectic and sublation to those of Hegel. Lonergan explicitly differentiates his notion of sublation from Hegel's in *Method*, preferring Rahner's formation,[77] and only admits 'parallels' between his notion of the emergence of higher viewpoints and Hegel's *Aufhebung*.[78]

Comparison of Hegel and Lonergan is beyond the scope of this work,[79] nor is this the place for a discussion of Lonergan's viewpoints, the universal viewpoint and its relation to both dialectic and method.[80] McKinney's critique of Lonergan's functional specialty of Dialectics does not hold particularly well. Lonergan's dialectic is a means of sorting diverging interpretations of texts at least in the context of theological method. Lonergan does use the term dialectic in slightly different ways in different places, but that is not to say his functional specialty of Dialectic is incoherent.

5.2.2.5 Foundations

Foundations is the thematisation and objectification of conversion. It is the horizon within which the meaning of doctrines is to be found. Not all conversions are authentic, and so not all horizons are useful for theology. Foundations elucidate the conflicts found in Dialectics and form the basis of the remaining specialties.[81]

In Dialectics, as we noted, change and growth can occur. In making choices we create our characters; our characters are established by the choices we have made. Foundations includes reflection upon this new reality constructed by the choices. The conversions discussed in Dialectics are articulated here. Faith is a personal act, a valuation, a decision, an experience of a gift from the Divine. Faith is not a conclusion of a logical argument.[82]

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[74] Gregson, 'Theological Method and Collaboration: II', 99-100.
[75] R. H. McKinney, 'Lonergan's Notion of Dialectic', *The Thomist* 46 (1982), 221-241.
[76] G. Hughes, 'A Reply to Ronald Mckinney', *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 1, 1 (1983), 70-3.
[77] Lonergan, *Method*, 227.
[78] Lonergan, *Insight*, 398. Hughes, 'A Reply to Ronald Mckinney', 70-1.
[79] See Morelli, 'Lonergan's Debt to Hegel and the Appropriation of Critical Realism'.
[80] See Coelho, *Hermeneutics and Method*.
[81] Lonergan, *Method*, 125-7.
[82] Lonergan, *Method*, 253-4. Gregson, 'Theological Method and Collaboration: II', 101-2.

Lonergan suggests that conversion is not a prerequisite for the first phase of theology, but that it is for the second phase.[83] Conversion can be present in the first phase and does have its impact. The conversion is not purely private, but 'one begins to belong to a different social group.'[84] Pannenberg notes that this means that theology rests both on a personal decision and on authority.[85] Further, Lonergan can be interpreted as making it impossible to discuss religious doctrines across frontiers between different religions and between religion and irreligion.[86]

Meynell argues that while this is one of the most telling criticisms of the method, it is not unanswerable. Firstly, religious conversion is being in love which issues in, but does not entail, accepting some set of religious doctrines. Religious conversion is some sort of basic good will. This can apply to anyone, not just Christians. Secondly, Meynell suggests that Lonergan's way of expressing religious conversion arises because he is writing for believing theologians. Instead of 'moral conversion', Meynell thinks we should speak of turning away from exclusive concern with self-satisfaction to realising objective values. Instead of 'intellectual conversion' we should appeal to the self-destructive consequences of philosophical positions other than (Lonergan's) critical realism. As noted, 'religious conversion' should become 'basic good will.'[87]

Meynell thus thinks that, by changing terminology, this objection can be met. To some extent he is correct, but in doing so he is 'to a degree … in contradiction to Lonergan.'[88] However, Lonergan notes that Dialectic does not take sides, it is the person who decides. Given that persons of whatever degree of conversion, and to whatever they are converted can still, under many circumstances, communicate, perhaps the objection has less force than Meynell suspects.[89]

5.2.2.6 Doctrines

Doctrines stand within the horizon given by Foundations and concern all branches of theology.[90] An individual or group or formally-constituted community makes affirmations which express its basic truths and values. The cultural context in which the doctrine arose has to be understood. Further, different formulations in different cultures may exist at the same time.

[83] Lonergan, *Method*, 251.
[84] Lonergan, *Method*, 252.
[85] Pannenberg, 'History and Meaning', 97-8.
[86] Meynell, *Theology of Lonergan*, 38.
[87] Meynell, *Theology of Lonergan*, 40.
[88] Meynell, *Theology of Lonergan*, 41.
[89] Lonergan, *Method*, 251.
[90] Lonergan, *Method*, 127.

Doctrines develop, and we know this via the functional specialties of Research, Interpretation, History, Dialectics and the decision of Foundations. Further, in order to preach the Gospel to all nations, doctrines must be communicated in culturally appropriate ways. Additionally, they are constitutive of the individual and the Christian community. They can cause conflict or resolve it.[91]

Lonergan affirms the statements of the First Vatican Council on the permanence of the meaning of dogmas.[92] Indeed, he states that he has written a chapter on doctrine without subscribing to any doctrine about doctrine except that of Vatican I, and that he has done so for ecumenical reasons.[93] His understanding of the doctrine of Vatican I on the permanence of dogma is that there exist mysteries hidden in God revealed to humans and that these revelations have had their meanings infallibly declared by the church. We cannot substitute another meaning for that which has been revealed.[94] Revelation is not just data but truth. Dogmas, therefore, are expressions of truth. Statements of dogma have meaning in a context; what is permanently true is the dogma in its original context. To elucidate that meaning requires Research, Interpretation, History and Dialectics.[95]

Lonergan argues that what he describes as classicism, the claim that there is just one valid culture, denies the historicity of dogmas. The ground of unity is not subscribing to correct formulae, but our hearts being flooded with God's love (Rom 5:5). The meaning of infallibly-declared dogma is beyond the changes of human history but the contexts wherein the meaning is grasped vary.[96]

Lonergan views humanity as having various levels of differentiation of consciousness. There are different levels of consciousness, such as common sense, transcendence, beauty and philosophic interiority.[97] He argues that the Gospel must be preached to all in different modes appropriate to different differentiations of consciousness. No one should be obliged to further differentiate their consciousness, or not to do so because of their faith, and all may express their faith appropriately to their level of differentiation.

Finally, 'no-one should pass judgment on matters he does not understand, and no-one with a less or a differently differentiated consciousness is capable of understanding accurately what is

[91] Lonergan, *Method*, 297.
[92] Lonergan, *Method*, 298.
[93] He does not state what to do if Ecumenical partners do not subscribe to the teaching of Vatican I, however. Lonergan, *Method*, 308-9.
[94] Lonergan, *Method*, 300.
[95] Lonergan, *Method*, 302-3.
[96] Lonergan, *Method*, 303-5.
[97] Lonergan, *Method*, 303.

said by a person with a more fully differentiated consciousness.'[98] As it stands this statement seems fatal to the prospect of preaching the Gospel to any other culture, or even within a culture. Someone with an undifferentiated consciousness on this basis cannot understand a person who may have a differentiated consciousness.[99] Lonergan claims that the real problem is lack of conversion in the teachers, and lack of understanding between persons with different differentiations of consciousness.

A further problem emerges here, in that a hypothetical member of the Lonergan School could make statements which others might object to or not understand. The hypothetical scholar could then argue that the others had not understood because they had insufficiently differentiated consciousnesses. Further, this argument can be turned on Lonergan himself: does he simply say this because he understands himself to have a sufficiently differentiated consciousness and, if so, how does he know that? The Lonergan community would seem to require a great deal of graciousness in order to avoid sounding at least a little arrogant, patronising and, possibly, smug in terms of differentiation of consciousness.

5.2.2.7 Systematics

Doctrines give rise to further questions. Doctrinal expression can be figurative, symbolic, or descriptive and become vague under scrutiny. Doctrines may seem to be inconsistent or fallacious. Systematics aims to remove these difficulties, to show the inner coherence of doctrine.[100] Systematics is the exploration of the cultural meaning of doctrines.[101]

The principle function of Systematics is to understand the mysteries of faith. Faith seeks understanding. When we inquire diligently, soberly and piously we can, with God's help, attain understanding of the mysteries from analogy with what we naturally know and from the interconnection of the mysteries. Systematics takes over the facts established by doctrines and works them into a whole.[102]

Our response to transcendent mystery is adoration, and adoration in community, worship, requires words. Words have their meaning in a culture and cultures change and interact. The ongoing contexts of worship are not free from problems. The meaning of doctrines becomes obscure because of changes in culture, science, interpretation of biblical and other sources and philosophy. What doctrines mean is the task of Systematics.[103]

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[98] Lonergan, *Method*, 306.
[99] On the other hand, this might account for a number of sermons I have heard over the years.
[100] Lonergan, *Method*, 127.
[101] Gregson, 'Theological Method and Collaboration: II', 111.
[102] Lonergan, *Method*, 311.
[103] Lonergan, *Method*, 319.

The solution is a gradual increase of understanding. This yields further questions and further understanding. Eventually the subject is mastered, perhaps by successive generations of scholars, and given an overall treatment. The order of this treatment is not the order of discovery, but the order of teaching. Discovery is roundabout, teaching is more systematic. Lonergan follows Aquinas in wanting theology taught in this disciplined way.[104]

Lonergan thinks that there is continuity, development and revision in Systematics. Continuity is ensured by the normative structure of our consciousness, the continuity of God's gift of his love to us, the permanence of dogmas and the genuine achievements of the past. There is development as the Gospel is effectively preached in different cultures, and in differentiations of human consciousness. Further, in Dialectics, the truth can come to light. Development implies revision, and some of the theological revisions are the result of cultural developments. The process is ongoing; revisions may well imply further developments.[105]

Doran notes that the crucial issue is of moving from description to explanation and doing so at the 'level of the times', that is, within one's present cultural context.[106] Shea objects that despite his claims to the contrary, Lonergan remains wedded to 'classicism' through his 'unreserved devotion to the Catholic doctrinal tradition'.[107] Therefore Lonergan cannot respond to developments in language, mythical and symbolic studies. Meynell correctly responds that Lonergan does not suppose that there is only one proper culture, and so he cannot be accused of classicism.[108]

Doran suggests that while Lonergan is correct, he does not go far enough in his discussion of Systematics. Lonergan describes the principle function of Systematics but does not say enough about the other functions. Further, Lonergan does not discuss non-dogmatic elements of Christian meaning which are still mysteries. Third, Doran thinks that the relation between the orders of discovery and teaching needs elucidation. Finally, Doran observes that some permanent dogmas are best expressed in dramatic or artistic terms, and the question of how we move from description to explanation in these cases needs further exploration.[109]

Lonergan's definition of systematic theology is not that of many theologians. Grudem, for example, states '[s]ystematic theology is any study that answers the question, 'What does the

[104] Lonergan, *Method*, 319. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Prologus.
[105] Lonergan, *Method*, 325.
[106] R. M. Doran, 'Bernard Lonergan and the Functions of Systematic Theology', *Theological Studies* 59 (1998), 569-607, 571.
[107] Shea, 'Stance and Task', 275.
[108] Meynell, *Theology of Lonergan*, 36-7.
[109] Doran, 'Functions of Systematic Theology', 571-2.

whole Bible teach us today?' about any given topic'.[110] Leaving aside discussion of Grudem's specific definition, it is clear he differs from Lonergan. Grudem observes that historical theology, philosophical theology and apologetics are often included in a broader definition of systematics than his, and these would be covered by other of Lonergan's functional specialties than Systematics. Lonergan is able to define Systematics in any way he chooses, but his specific definition, even in the broader sense that Doran describes, will not be accepted by everyone.

Overall, Lonergan's concept of the functional specialty of Systematics survives the critics fairly well, but does seem, as Doran observes, in need of further elucidation. Doran thinks that Lonergan's definition of Systematics as an attempt to understand the mysteries of the faith is correct, but Lonergan only sketches its operations in *Method*. Further development of Systematics is beyond the scope of this thesis, however.[111]

5.2.2.8 Communications

The Christian church is a community resulting from the outer communication of Christ's message and from the inner gift of God's love. Practical theology is concerned with the communication of the message. The communicators have at their disposal the results of the previous seven functional specialties, but also have to practice what they preach. Further, the message is to be communicated to all nations and so proclaimers of it must preach from within a culture, not from their own culture.[112]

The church community constitutes itself through this communication. It is thus a society within a world-wide society. It is a structured process, training its personnel, and is out going, existing for the whole of humankind. It is also a redemptive process. The love of Christian charity reconciles us to our true being. Again, this is for all humankind and thus the church has to plan its use of resources.[113]

Communications is the task of making theology concrete, of engaging with every aspect of the human condition.[114] It is concerned with theology in its external relations with other disciplines, with the various cultures of human existence and the requirements of the diverse media available in any place and time.[115]

The Christian church is a community gathered around the inner gift of God's love and the outer communication of Christ's message. The message is about what to believe, what to become

[110] W. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, (Nottingham: IVP, 2007), 21.
[111] Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?*, 6.
[112] Lonergan, *Method*, 334.
[113] Lonergan, *Method*, 334-5.
[114] Gregson, 'Theological Method and Collaboration: II', 116.
[115] Lonergan, *Method*, 127.

and what to do. Christians have to live the message as well as proclaim it. There is of course the problem that theologians, as well as social scientists and scientists, may not agree, and Lonergan sees here a further role for Dialectics, for sorting out the true positions from the ideological counter-positions.[116] We see here evidence that perhaps the functional specialties are not quite as ordered and separated as Lonergan's *Method* would have us think.

Finally, Lonergan acknowledges that he has been speaking vaguely of the Christian church, and there are different confessions, notions of church and different forms of cooperation between groups. He suggests that there is a real unity in response to one Lord and one Spirit. Ideal unity is the fruit of Jesus' prayer '… that they may all be one.' (John 17:21). Part of ecumenism, Lonergan thinks, is dialogue between theologians, and the functional specialties of Dialectics and Doctrines represent his views on this. But ecumenism, he accepts, is also dialogue between churches and he laments the slowness of the recovery of unity.[117]

5.2.2.9 The Method of Correlation

According to Lonergan, a theology mediates between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of religion in that matrix. He conceives culture empirically, and so theology is an ongoing process and requires a method. A theological method is not a set of rules to be followed blindly, but a set of clusters of operations performed by theologians as they undertake various tasks.[118] Veeneman therefore classifies Lonergan as a theologian of correlation along with Rahner and Tillich. Correlational theology is interested in dialogue between the church and broader society and culture, theology and other disciplines.[119]

Dornan and, following him, Ormerod, would object to classifying Lonergan, at least in any simple sense, as a theological correlationist.[120] Ormerod sees Lonergan's method as two movements, one distinguishing the meaning of symbols of tradition from current experience, and the second as bringing them together to generate understanding of the Christian faith.[121]

We have noted above that Lonergan defines special and general categories of theology. General categories 'regard' objects from other disciplines, while special categories 'regard' objects of theology.[122] This seems to be similar to the method of correlation, but Ormerod

[116] Lonergan, *Method*, 336.
[117] Lonergan, *Method*, 338-9.
[118] Lonergan, *Method*, 3.
[119] M. M. Veeneman, *Introducing Theological Method: A Survey of Contemporary Theologians and Approaches*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2017), 35-60. Lonergan is discussed on pp 55-60.
[120] Doran, *Dialectics of History*; N. Ormerod, 'Quarrels with the Method of Correlation', *Theological Studies* 57, 4 (1996), 707-719.
[121] Ormerod, 'Quarrels', 708.
[122] Lonergan, *Method*, 264.

disagrees.[123] Doran, he notes, does make distinctions, but the special and general categories do not map onto tradition and situation. The situation is already theological; the tradition has used both sets of categories in its development.[124]

Further, to obtain the required correlation, some external means of selection is required. The method of correlation does not specify these criteria and the danger is that covert and uncritical criteria are used which are arbitrary from the viewpoint of methodology.[125] The outcome of this is that different people, drawing on the same resources but using different criteria can come to radically different conclusions and debate is stalemated.[126]

Doran suggests that categories from our theological tradition must be integrated with the contemporary situation. The grounding of this is differentiated consciousness, and the integration entails a development. The development can occur in both directions, from tradition to situation and vice versa, deepening our appropriation. The method is not correlation but mutual self-mediation between tradition and situation.[127]

Ormerod argues that the method of correlation assumes that the human sciences can completely analyse the present situation. He thinks that this cannot be the case unless some 'higher level' control of meaning is invoked and that requires theology. Thus tradition and situation cannot be separated and the method of correlation is undermined.[128]

The issue resolves, according to Doran and Ormerod, into a rejection of a 'Scotist conceptualism' which Lonergan also rejects.[129] The Scotist position is identified with the method of correlation in finding a nexus between two concepts, one from tradition and one from the situation. Lonergan argues that Scotists reject insight into phantasm and the position of Aquinas that understanding precedes conceptualisation.[130] Doran and Ormerod are concerned that the criteria for appropriating tradition, the choice of analysis of the situation and the criteria for bringing the two into correlation are not given methodological grounding.[131]

Lonergan's method, despite these objections, is best viewed as correlation. Lonergan would not I think object to Tillich's statement 'Theology moves back and forth between two poles,

[123] Ormerod, 'Quarrels', 711.
[124] Doran, *Dialectics of History*, 456.
[125] Ormerod, 'Quarrels', 712.
[126] Ormerod, 'Quarrels', 713.
[127] Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?*, 46.
[128] Ormerod, 'Quarrels', 715.
[129] Ormerod, 'Quarrels', 716. Doran, *Dialectics of History*, 455.
[130] Lonergan, *Verbum*, 38-9 & n. 126.
[131] Ormerod, 'Quarrels', 717. Doran, *Dialectics of History*, 454.

the eternal truth of its foundation and the temporal situation in which the eternal truth must be received'.[132] It seems unlikely that any theologian would assume that the social sciences can fully analyse a situation. Doran and Ormerod seem to be arguing from within a particular Thomist position.

5.2.3 Conclusion

Overall I suspect that Lonergan's theological method is a step too far. It is built on the solid ground of his understanding of cognitive process, but the elements of his theological method are somewhat arbitrary within that. We can agree that the elements are probably part of the theological enterprise, but they are more interrelated than Lonergan admits, and the ordering of them may not be the way theology is done. It would seem that Lonergan has over-emphasised his cognitive structure and imposed it upon theological method. This is not to deny that the stages of cognition he describes happen in intentional thought and within each functional specialty, but theological method does not seem to require the imposed large scale structure of the cognitive scheme.

Further, I can find little evidence that anything except collaboration in the most general sense exists in theology. Theological papers are not produced by teams of people all with one goal in mind. While a theologian builds on work done in the past and present, an exegete writing a commentary does not expect their results to be used in a certain way by, say, a systematic theologian. In science, a programmer who contributes an extension to a model to simulate a certain experiment does expect their results to be used in that way.

We further note that the method of theology seems to be largely a discussion within Roman Catholic theology, rather than more broadly. It is possible that this is a consequence of the ecclesiology of the Roman Catholic Church, rather than an oversight on the part of non-Roman Catholic theologians. Most scientists get on and do science, and most theologians seem to get on and do theology without explicitly thinking about the method they are using. Lonergan was fond of quoting Einstein's advice to a theorist of knowledge 'Pay no attention to what they [physicists] say, watch what they do'.[133] Perhaps this advice should be extended to theologians, although this is not to say that theologians (or scientists) might not benefit from considering their methods.

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[132] P. Tillich, *Systematic Theology Vol. 1*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1951), 3. Quoted in Veeneman, *Theological Method*, 36.

[133] Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*, 81. Lonergan, 'Isomorphism', 138. See also editor's note *f*, p. 284.

5.3 Ramsey's Theological Method

There is no specifically described 'theological method' to be found in Ramsey's work. He does, however, tackle a number of perceived theological problems, and we can see from these that he has a specific method of addressing them.[134] The pattern is that Ramsey will consider a topic which, under the circumstances of the day, seems to be becoming irrelevant or difficult. He will consider the topic as it is usually described, and then draw out its elements as construed as behaving in a logically odd manner. This is then used to provide a basis for understanding the topic in a new manner.

We attempt to extract a theological method from Ramsey's more theological writings. One of Ramsey's main aims, often, is to undermine what he sees as unwarranted certainty in theology. To repeat his catchphrase, we can be certain of God but must be tentative in theology. For example, when Ramsey considers the concept of Hell he wishes to describe the character of theological argument, the nature of theological assertions and the empirical grounding that must be given to them. We find that Ramsey does have a consistent theological method, but it is flexible. His method involves defining the problem, looking at the language and evolution of a doctrine (often using his idea of qualified models), and seeking the original disclosure, which he then recontextualises for his contemporary theological context. These different aspects of his method are usually present in his theology, but are flexible in the order of presentation.

We suggest that the stages of Ramsey's method include the following. He states the concept in its baldest form, and lists the objections to it. This usually comes first. He considers the historical reasons behind the emergence of the doctrine, and modern responses to it. He also tracks back to find the disclosure(s) of God in which the biblical or historical basis of the doctrine can be grounded. On the basis of historical development and original disclosure, he can then recast the doctrine into qualified models, and subjects these to careful consideration to see how the cluster of images that form around the doctrine, and their models and qualifications point towards God, and how the objections, misunderstandings and blunders can be avoided. These stages can be repeated or overlapped in the process of doing theology.

In the case of the concept of Hell, Ramsey starts with the popular idea of the theological concept. He describes Hell at its 'most colourless', the place in life after death of endless punishment. He immediately develops three difficulties with the concept. Firstly, it is morally repugnant; secondly it is inconsistent with the Christian doctrine of God, specifically God's love

[134] Specific topics addressed include: I. T. Ramsey, 'The Paradox of Omnipotence', *Mind* 65, 258 (1956), 263-266; I. T. Ramsey, 'Hell', *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplements* 2 (1968), 207-225; I. T. Ramsey, 'The Concept of the Eternal', in *The Christian Hope*, ed. G. B. Caird (London: S.P.C.K., 1970), 35 - 48.

and mercy; and thirdly, he finds cosmological difficulties, specifically over the location of Hell.[135]

Ramsey has thus set up the contemporary theological problem over the concept of Hell. Initially, he states the problem and the objections to it. His method is now to inquire as to why these issues have arisen, or at least why, given the difficulties, anyone should subscribe to the concept.

Ramsey asks why anyone would subscribe to an unattractive concept as Hell and starts to answer by pointing to the evidence we have for it. Firstly, there is evidence from Scripture. There are accounts of Hell in Jewish apocalypse and in Revelation. He does not think that this alone would have created such a successful doctrine of Hell as we have, so adduces a second reason, that we feel that moral choice has an abiding significance. Finally, Ramsey thinks that people have confused a reverential refusal to question God with a refusal to question their own understandings of God. God is authoritative but our doctrines of God are not.[136]

Ramsey has thus set up a variety of reasons, which may be interlinked, for how the doctrine of Hell, as we understand it, has come about. These themes arise from Scripture, moral expectation and an impression that religious people are too ready to imagine themselves in the position of God and to talk from God's point of view.

The third step in Ramsey's argument is to give examples in contemporary theology. He quotes Hick, Downey and Journet, and expresses anxiety about 'theology in full flight', the arguments being about what God could or could not do. Ramsey wants to reframe the argument as a problem in our talk about God. The problem, according to Ramsey, is in our theological language. He sees that we need greater caution in our theological statements.

This step, in terms of method, is to start to analyse the issue in terms of the language used. Ramsey wants to transfer the problem of Hell from talk about whether God could condemn people to eternal punishment to an examination of the language we use about God. This is a transition from the material mode to the formal mode, from what God can do to what we can say. Ramsey holds that theological discussions often confuse reference and logical questions. If we speak of God in too human terms we risk pointless arguments about what God can or cannot do. All we can really do is understand what we can or cannot say about God.

[135] Ramsey, 'Hell', 207-10.
[136] Ramsey, 'Hell', 210-3.

Ramsey takes the doctrine of Hell as found in Hugh of St Victor as a morally repugnant interweaving of the doctrines of arbitrary election and redemption of sin.[137] Even here, Ramsey finds some useful themes. First, God is an irreducible posit, the objective reference of the theist's determining commitment. This does not mean that our understanding of God is unquestionable, however. Second, Hugh does incorporate biblical themes, although Ramsey thinks that the attitude to the Bible, where assertions have the status of irreducible posits of God, is mistaken. Thirdly, Ramsey thinks that while we must use human language about God it needs logical qualification. Fourth, we can incorporate moral insights into theological discourse. Redemption may allow sin to be consistently incorporated into a morally approvable purpose which is then attributable to God. This, however, must remain open to further discourse and insight. Finally, empirically, there seem to be always those who will not respond to the Gospel. If we interweave this fact with plausible insights into punishment, however, we blunder logically and theologically.[138]

At this stage Ramsey has reviewed the historical formulation of the doctrine, and extracted from that some themes which he can develop as a better or deeper understanding of it. He has contextualised the doctrine in terms of its biblical and historical-theological character, and is now poised to develop a better, less objectionable version of it.

Ramsey's first point is that biblical images are not descriptive pictures. Life after death does not involve literal fire, brimstone and gnashing of teeth; the relationships with fire extinguishers, sulphur chemistry and dentistry are not direct.[139] Ramsey teases out the biblical image of fire, warning against an over simplified, descriptive logic to such discourse. Human models of punishment and separation need to be suitably qualified for the new context, and this qualification requires the use of the word 'eternal'. 'Eternal punishment' is a pointer to the pain and loneliness of separation from God.

Secondly there are errors and blunders clustering around the concept of Hell. Ramsey wants to reinforce the need for logical qualifiers to remind us of the status of models we use in discussing the concept. The logic of the qualifier is not that of the descriptive adjective. 'Eternal' is not the same as 'everlasting'.[140]

[137] Ramsey quotes from J. Hick, *Evil and the Love of God*, (London: Macmillan, 1966), 98.
[138] Ramsey, 'Hell', 216-9.
[139] Ian Paisley: '… cast into hell, where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.' Little old Lady: 'Dr Paisley, I'm ninety-four and I have had no teeth for thirty years.' IP: 'Teeth will be provided.' G. Fraser, 'Let Us Pray That Vicars Stop Telling Jokes in Sermons,' *The Guardian*, 10 May 2016; Ramsey, 'Hell', 220.
[140] Ramsey, 'Hell', 223.

In his theological method, Ramsey, through his analysis of the language used, moves towards an interpretation of a doctrine that is acceptable, nuanced and consistent. He accepts that various models might be used, but that they all are qualified, as being human models that require modification before being applied to God. These 'qualified models' are the key to Ramsey's understanding of religious language (Section 4.2.4).

Finally, Ramsey argues that the point of the doctrine of Hell, of all the pictures and qualified models that cluster around it, aims to recapture a disclosure of God's redeeming love. The doctrines and pictures need to be contextualised in their particular strands of discourse. Doctrines are complex, many stranded and multi-model discourses. Their aim is to point to God. The difficulty is that they are subject to logical blunders and misunderstandings.[141]

From this example we have extracted his theological method, the set of stages which Ramsey uses in his theological writing. We can check from other works that the method Ramsey uses, as outlined above, is more general than his consideration of Hell. When he considers the concept of Eternity, Ramsey introduces two concepts, the 'eternal' and the 'sempiternal' and sets it up as a problem in theology.[142] Taking a contemporary article on the topic, he traces back the concepts to Parmemides and Plato.[143] Ramsey then passes to Augustine, Boethius and Aquinas. He regards these views as different models, and sees assertions about eternity as grounded in cosmic disclosures, reached in a variety of ways from the various sempiternal models. He then interprets some contemporary views in terms of his concept of the eternal being given by disclosures based around sempiternal models. We can see that here Ramsey follows a similar method to that outlined above. The content differs, but the method is similar.

We can multiply these examples. For instance, Ramsey considers 'eternal punishment' in the first of his Maurice lectures.[144] Here, his aim is to show that we can be unsure in religion (although not about God) and approaches the subject through consideration of the problems that F. D. Maurice caused in the nineteenth century in opposing the cut and dried character of the doctrine. Through Maurice Ramsey traces the doctrine to the Bible, various preachers and teachers and then to Ramsey's own position, that we need to peg our assertions into an awareness of God; that we need to be wary of cut and dried systematization; and that lack of logical circumspection can lead to blunders.

[141] Ramsey, 'Hell', 224-5.
[142] Ramsey, 'The Concept of the Eternal'.
[143] W. Kneale, 'Time and Eternity in Theology', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 61 (1960 - 1961), 87-108.
[144] I. T. Ramsey, *On Being Sure in Religion*, (London: Athlone Press, 1963), 1 - 25.

Stage	Description
Contemporary Problem	Statement and description of difficulties
Evidence	Reasons for the contemporary doctrine
Examples	The problem from contemporary theology and analysis of the language used
Historical Formulations	Themes in the doctrine and analysis of the language used
Re-interpretation	Recasting the evidence, examples and historical themes into qualified models
Underlying disclosure	Pegging the doctrine back into the cosmic disclosure from whence it comes.

Table 5.3: Ramsey's Implicit Theological Method

Ramsey although he has no written, explicit, theological method, does have a method which he applies, with due regard for the circumstances, to theological problems. His aim is to elucidate the basis of a problematic doctrine and the issues that common interpretations of it give, on the basis of an analysis of religious language and the logical oddness of that discourse.

Unfortunately, few, if any, theologians have engaged with Ramsey's specifically theological thought. However, from the foregoing we can suggest that Ramsey's work falls within a theology of correlation, along with, according to Veeneman, Tillich, Rahner and Lonergan.[145] We reserve a comparison with Lonergan to Section 5.4.1. Here, we consider Ramsey's possible responses to criticisms of the method of correlation.

The intent of the method of correlation is to mediate between faith and culture. We can see that Ramsey is undertaking this mediation. He identifies traditional doctrines whose meanings are becoming obscured in contemporary culture, and aims to reinterpret them. He is thus open to the criticism that he translates Christian doctrine into secular culture.[146]

Ramsey's argument that we have to match language of God with language about the world, religious situations with 'secular situations' led him into some odd looking assertions, such as 'Beatle language was virtually theological language.'[147] This assertion did receive a certain quantity of derision in the press,[148] but his point is that we use theological language based on our times. Victorians, for example, used 'railway to Heaven' language as a model based on a cosmic disclosure. Ramsey is seeking relevant contemporary language.[149] He can answer the 'translation critique' by observing that he does trace a doctrine through its language to the

[145] Veeneman, *Theological Method*, 35-60.
[146] D. H. Kelsey, 'Paul Tillich', in *The Modern Theologians*, ed. D. F. Ford (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 87-102, 100.
[147] I. T. Ramsey, 'Towards the Relevant in Theological Language', *Modern Churchman* 8, 1 (1964), 46-58, 49, 55.
[148] P. Dickinson, 'Hark the Herald Angels Scream,' *Punch* 1965; D. J. Hamblin, 'Those Mad, Merry Vicars of England,' *Life*, 29 January 1965, 58, 4.
[149] Ramsey, 'Towards the Relevant', 55.

original, historical, cosmic disclosure, but that language shifts and therefore doctrine needs to be (carefully) recast in a changing culture. In this, Ramsey is close to Lonergan's position (Section 5.2.2.6).

We can object that Ramsey only chooses theological problems that can be analysed using his ideas on religious language. It seems unlikely that all problems in theological language are related to models, metaphors, logical oddness and cosmic disclosures. A different method may well be required to solve other problems. Perhaps Ramsey's response here could be that his approach can work when others seem only to lead to more confusion; he can concede that there is no sure method in theology, and that his is but one among many.

Stiver observes that modernity relies on a secure foundation and secure method for progress, and that this lofty goal has largely failed. A theological method can be viewed as a 'map to be consulted occasionally'; theologians should do theology, not ponder how to do it.[150] Facts are theory laden; they can be re-interpreted. When a problem arises there is no already known way available to solve it. Gadamer criticises the modernist mania for method, at least for the human sciences.[151] The reliance on a method requires a judgment that cannot be validated by that method.

This approach accords with Ramsey's theological 'method'. He does not have a fixed template for solving theological problems, although he does have certain intellectual and philosophical commitments which guide his approach. Stiver notes that clarity about a theologian's epistemological and philosophical commitments is still needed to provide a framework for doing theology.[152] This might only become clear in retrospect, although in Ramsey's case he is clear and consistent that his concepts of disclosure and qualified models are applied to his theology.

Stiver considers that postmodern theology is hermeneutical in nature, and that this offers advantages. The model of textual interpretation indicates elusive and indeterminate meanings, the surplus and conflict of interpretation.[153] While it is anachronistic to suggest that Ramsey is a hermeneutic or postmodern theologian, this view resembles his idea that theology requires many models which interact and correct each other. The interpretations are not denigrated, nor are the texts or models discarded. Ramsey reinterprets in the historical context of their origin and notes the limitations. Ramsey is adamant that we cannot rely on any one model.

[150] D. R. Stiver, 'Theological Method', in *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology*, ed. K. J. Vanhoozer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 170-185, 170-1.
[151] H.-G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 3-7.
[152] Stiver, 'Theological Method', 175.
[153] Stiver, 'Theological Method', 178.

Religious language is licenced by the widest possible range of models. A single model can be misleading unless contextualised in multi-model discourse.[154]

Stiver notes that theology begins with a text, experience or tradition that has already 'grasped' us. Theology is, in his view, a second order critical reflection on the texts and practices of Christian faith. The hermeneutic of suspicion is followed by a constructive phase bringing different views into coherence. Usually this is built around a central model.[155] Ramsey notes the difficulty of deciding on which model to prefer, and describes this as the problem of preferences.[156]

Ramsey believes that a relevant theological language requires us to listen to ordinary language, while conceding that words are contextually hazardous. A reliable theology will need to be in dialogue with other disciplines. We need to be cautious in developing theological models but also recognise that even generalised doctrines contain models. Further, we need to appreciate the contexts of our models and remember that theological models are not picturing models. The fit of the models to the world is given by the cosmic disclosure of God. Talk about God combines understanding and mystery.[157]

Ramsey shows some similar concerns to postmodern theology. Given readings arise in a context and need to be interpreted as such, and re-interpreted in the time of the theologian. Horizons are fused. We understand something of the original context and can make use of that in our current concerns.[158] There is no single dominant interpretation. Ramsey's problem of preference, the threat of relativism, hangs over postmodern theology as well.[159]

Overall, Ramsey's method stands up well to criticism, so long as we concede that it is not the only method available. He draws attention to the language in which theology is performed and hence to the use and inadequacies of models and metaphors, and the requirement to unpack them in their original context and for today.

5.4 Comparison

We have seen that, while Lonergan and Ramsey broadly agree about human intentional cognitive process and science (Chapters 3 and 2) they disagree over the need for an explicit method for doing theology. Lonergan spent a large quantity of his career thinking, teaching and writing about theological method. Ramsey used but did not describe a consistent method.

[154] Ramsey, 'Talking About God', 84-5.
[155] Stiver, 'Theological Method', 182-3.
[156] Ramsey, 'Talking About God', 85-6.
[157] Ramsey, 'Talking About God', 94-7.
[158] Stiver, 'Theological Method', 179.
[159] Stiver, 'Theological Method', 184.

A review of some theologians through the ages suggests that there is no fixed theological method.[160] Allen notes that Lonergan can be described as arguing for some basic analogy between theological and other methods, specifically scientific method.[161] Method is determined by the content, however. Chemistry is mediated through the periodic table, laboratory equipment and so on. Theology is mediated via texts, traditions and language about God.[162]

Lonergan's theological method can be described as a specialisation of his generalised empirical method. This, in its turn, is based on Lonergan's cognitive process, and Lonergan uses scientific method as the clearest example of his cognitive process. Lonergan's theological method is rooted in his fundamental cognitive process and is generated, to some degree, by analogy with method in the natural sciences.

Lonergan does attempt to separate methodology from theology. Most theologians, Ramsey included, have an implicit rather than an explicit theological method. Similarly, most scientists have an implicit scientific methodology. Chalmers notes that scientists are 'not particularly adept at taking a step back … and describing and characterising the nature of [their] work'.[163] We can suggest that, perhaps, theologians may be similarly good at making theological progress but poor at discussing their methods.

5.4.1 General Comparison

The steps of the three different theological methods we have discussed are shown in Table 5.4. We have ordered this table according to Ramsey's often used ordering of his stages to avoid privileging Lonergan's method. The first observation is that Lonergan's methods leave no room for the statement of a problem. Ramsey works from the recognition that a Christian doctrine, or at least the language in which it is expressed, can be problematic. Thus he has to state the problem in his initiation of the discussion. Lonergan, it seems, has no such requirement; a theological problem is simply present and the method is initiated by gathering data in the Research functional specialty.

Lonergan's functional specialty of Research is matched by Ramsey's pointing to the evidence from Scripture and history. Lonergan's Research has a wider scope, perhaps, than Ramsey's but both require the gathering of data. The data is analysed in Lonergan's functional specialty of Interpretation. This seems to be the equivalent of the DiM precept of 'understand', as it

[160] P. L. Allen, *Theological Method: A Guide for the Perplexed*, (London: T & T Clark, 2012).
[161] Allen, *Theological Method*, 9.
[162] Allen, *Theological Method*, 8.
[163] A. F. Chalmers, *What Is This Thing Called Science?*, 3rd ed., (Maidenhead: Open University, 1999), 252.

correlates with the understanding level of consciousness from cognitive process. In Ramsey this stage is best represented by his discussion of historical formulations of doctrine, although this overlaps significantly with the functional specialty of History. In Lonergan's DiM method, History has its nearest equivalent as 'understand systematically', given that understanding develops historically.

Lonergan's DiM Precept	Lonergan's Functional Specialty	Ramsey's Method Stages
		Contemporary Problem
	Research	Evidence
Reverse counter-positions Develop positions	Dialectics	Contemporary Examples
Understand	Interpretation	Historical Formulations
Understand systematically	History	
	Foundations	
Accept responsibility for judgments		
	Systematics	Re-interpretation
	Doctrines	Underlying disclosure
	Communications	

Table 5.4: Comparison of Lonergan's and Ramsey's Methods.

The DiM precepts relating to positions and counter-positions are the clear equivalent of the functional specialty of Dialectics. In Ramsey's method, the nearest stage is that of his statement of contemporary examples of the theological problem he is tackling. Ramsey, as we have seen, is concerned that 'some fully fledged theologies can continue in flight and never touch down'.[164] The discerning of these counter-positions and the development of the more correct positions is key to all three methods.

We have noted that Ramsey and Lonergan have differences regarding the nature of doctrine. However, they both regard a discussion of doctrine as being a key stage in their method. Ramsey wishes to plug back into the original cosmic disclosure, noting that no formulation of a doctrine, which is given in terms of models and metaphors, can ever be a complete description of the original disclosure. Lonergan disagrees, in that he regards the dogma as being true in its original context and permanent in its meaning, although it can come to be better understood.[165] For Ramsey the original cosmic disclosure is true; for Lonergan the original statement of dogma in its original context is true. Both acknowledge the need to re-state

[164] Ramsey, 'Hell', 214.
[165] Lonergan, *Method*, 302.

doctrines in new contexts, but Ramsey does not think that there can have been an original full and correct statement of a doctrine.

Ramsey's stage 're-interpretation' seems to be roughly the equivalent of Lonergan's functional specialty of Systematics, although in Ramsey's writing it usually occurs before the reference back to the underlying disclosure. Ramsey re-casts the evidence as qualified models and interprets them as such in a modern context. Lonergan's Systematics aims at understanding the whole, addressing any seeming discrepancies between doctrines. Ramsey's 're-interpretation' and Lonergan's Systematics aim at doing a similar job. We note they occur at different places in their respective methods, and Lonergan's positioning of Systematics is related to the level of consciousness 'understanding' in his cognitive process. Its location depends more on Lonergan's cognitive process than how theology is being done. A generalisation of Lonergan's method will have to take account of this varying ordering of the functional specialties (see Section 7.3.4).

Ramsey has no place for the functional specialty of Communications, although he is engaged with it. Lonergan regards it as the fruit of the previous specialties, without which the others are in vain.[166] It is possible that Ramsey regarded this as being too obvious to notice, as theology has been communicated for centuries. Nevertheless, Lonergan's point is germane and draws attention to the means of communication, which is important in our media-diverse culture.

The two items outstanding, the functional specialty Foundations and the precept pertaining to judgment in DiM are related to Dialectics. We choose the true position and we have to stand by that judgment. In Foundations, this is a choice of horizon. We can choose a horizon that affirms Jesus is Lord, for example, or one which declares the New Testament to be a myth in its pejorative sense. This is the equivalent to part of Ramsey's 're-interpretation' stage. However, Foundations includes a selection of world view, which must also determine such things as the selection of a theological problem and which data pertains to it. Thus it seems that part of Foundations is misplaced, and has a role outside the method as described.[167] The misplaced part of Foundations is, in part, the equivalent of Ramsey's posing of the contemporary theological problem.

Overall, we find that Ramsey's and Lonergan's methods overlap in significant ways, but are not equivalents. In some cases the ordering of the stages is different, and Ramsey pays attention to the framing of the theological question which Lonergan seems to underemphasise.

[166] Lonergan, *Method*, 327.
[167] McGuckian, 'Role of Faith', 253.

Lonergan does give attention to communicating the results of the theological enterprise, which Ramsey seems to assume. We suggest that both authors have grasped some of the stages of theology but not all. As we noted earlier (Section 1.3), a statement of a scientific method is not complete, and the same seems to be true of a theological method.

5.4.2 Methods of Correlation

We have seen that both Ramsey and Lonergan can be categorised as having a correlational theological method, although this is a simplification. Ramsey does not look for a straightforward correlation between tradition and situation, but for a more complex examination of how our language about God can be in error and lead to difficulties. Lonergan does aim to correlate the present situation and doctrine, but his process does not map simply onto a method of correlation. In both cases there is a need to understand the authors' pre-existing philosophical and theological commitments to nuance their correlational approach.

Ramsey's philosophical commitments are clear. He thinks that our difficulties mainly arise from problems in human language about God. He does not think that a given doctrine from the tradition is crystal clear, either in its historical formulation and context, or in the current situation, but he does think that theological progress can be made by examining the language of the tradition and the ways in which it can be interpreted.

As we have noted, Lonergan does not pay much attention to language. Lonergan's assumption seems to be that doctrines are clear, even though the expression of them is culturally constrained. He argues that dogmas are permanent in their meaning because they are revealed truth. Once revealed and believed they can be better understood. Dogmas are expressed in statements, but a statement is meaningful in a context and contexts change. The meaning of a dogma is permanently true in its original context. To work with the dogma we have to establish its meaning in its original context in the first four functional specialties, and then to state it today we have to work through the second four.[168]

The problem here is that even the original dogma will have been expressed in human language and, as Ramsey observes, human language always falls short of expressing the divine. Thus the original expression of a dogma, even when the context of its expression is fully understood (a circumstance which is not very likely) cannot be expressing the full revelation of God. We are bound up in language, and language is inherently human.

As such, language is rather like the informal three laws of thermodynamics: You cannot win, you cannot break even and you cannot get out of the game. We can never express thoughts

[168] Lonergan, *Method*, 302-3.

and understandings totally; we cannot even express our thoughts adequately, but we have to say something or remain silent.[169] Neither Ramsey's nor Lonergan's methods can, therefore, be said to fail, but they can be said to be inadequate. Neither method is supposed to be a mechanical turning of a handle to obtain results, but both require much more than is, or can be, stated, to make them work as methods.

Defining a theological method is both useful and important, exposing hidden assumptions and theological and ecclesiological assumptions. This probably means that no method is going to obtain universal acceptance, in the same way, perhaps, that scientific method is thought to be in the physical sciences. As we have noted (Section 1.3), Polkinghorne does not think any description of scientific method can be exhaustive, and Polanyi believes that we know more than we can tell. We can certainly expect similar issues to arise in a theological method.

The functional specialties that Lonergan identifies in his method are, mostly, uncontroversial, as are the parts of Ramsey's method we have identified. What both Lonergan's scheme and our description of Ramsey's approach seem to miss out is the interrelatedness of the parts of doing theology in the mind and experience of the theologian. Both seem to miss out the narrative sweep of doing theology as a means of controlling theological method. This is considered further below (Section 7.2).

5.5 Conclusion

We have examined Lonergan's method for theology and some of the multiple objections and issues it raises. We have concluded that the parts of the method, the functional specialties, are valid elements of the theological enterprise, but their relation to each other and to the overall aim of theology are less satisfactory. The basis of the elements in Lonergan's cognitive process is valid, but the assignment of the functional specialties to the levels of the process can seem somewhat arbitrary.

From Ramsey's published theological work we have deduced his theological method, and found that it bears resemblance to the method of correlation used, for example, by Tillich. Ramsey is extremely sensitive to language and its problems, and this gives the correlative part of his method an extra dimension. This also indicates something of a lack in Lonergan's understanding of method. While there is always a reality to check against, human thought is bound up with language. His assertions that doctrines are eternal but are expressed differently in different contexts seem to ignore this.

[169] Compare Augustine, *On the Trinity*, (New Advent, 2007), 7.6.11.

The theological methods we have identified are useful insofar as they both show the theological, philosophical and, to an extent, ecclesiological commitments of their authors. Despite his claims to the contrary, Lonergan does operate within a fairly restrictive Roman Catholic milieu, and that places limits on what he is prepared to accept as being a variant of a dogma. Ramsey has much less restraint and can therefore admit that theological expressions are tentative in a way that may be closed to Lonergan.

Lonergan's later theological foundation, of empiricism and data, a dynamic unfolding of theological ideas, as opposed to classical theology's objective statements and static deduction is similar to Ramsey's. Ramsey starts with what Lonergan would call data – Scripture, patristic writings, and current problems with understanding. Lonergan, however, still has commitments to the truths of the Roman Catholic Church. Ramsey, while he is committed to the doctrine of the Church of England, does not have to ensure alignment with the Magisterium.

A theological method gives us a grammar or language with which to discuss theology. Lonergan's system might seem to be 'too neat to be true' and overly abstract,[170] but it gives a set of functions that seem to need to be accomplished in doing theology, and relations between them. In this sense, theological method provides a grammar for doing theology, a structure. It might be that clarifying theological method is like sharpening a knife without cutting anything, but it does allow us to consider how theology is done.[171] In the next chapter we examine a theological case study, the doctrine of the atonement, to relate theological outcomes to the stages of method.

[170] Allen, *Theological Method*, vii.
[171] Allen, *Theological Method*, 1.

6 Case Study – The Atonement

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter we work through the consequences of the considerations of cognition, language, science and method we have already considered. Both Lonergan and Ramsey were active theologians and we illustrate their different ways of working, and rather different results through a theological case study, that of the atonement. This is chosen because the doctrine of the atonement is one of the few areas of theology that both authors wrote about in a manner that we can compare. The aim is to explicate where and how their commitments, theological, philosophical and ecclesiological impact on their understanding and communication of the Christian doctrine of the atonement. In particular, we hope to relate the grammar of theological methods, described in Chapter 5, to the concrete process Ramsey and Lonergan describe in undertaking a theological project.

6.2 Lonergan on Atonement

6.2.1 Introduction

Lonergan wrote fairly extensively on the atonement (or redemption), and taught a number of courses during his time at the Gregorian University in Rome. There are thus a variety of sources available for analysis. These include Chapter 20 of *Insight*,[1] theses 15-17 of *De Verbo Incarnato*,[2] the manual from his Rome courses, and a lecture from 1958.[3] There is also an unpublished supplement to *De Verbo*, entitled *The Redemption: A Supplement*.[4]

Lonergan is reported as regarding writing his Latin manuals as 'practical chores'. He was teaching in a Scholastic environment which he regarded as 'hopelessly antiquated', although some parts of the manuals are, he thinks, 'permanently valid'.[5] Much of the secondary literature on Lonergan's ideas of atonement has focussed on Thesis 17 of *De Verbo Incarnato*, Lonergan's 'Law of the Cross'.[6] Crowe, however, sees the 1958 lecture, although predating the

[1] Lonergan, *Insight*, 709-51.
[2] B. J. F. Lonergan, *The Redemption*, (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2018), 4-263.
[3] Lonergan, 'The Redemption'.
[4] Lonergan, *The Redemption*, 265-643.
[5] Lonergan, 'An Interview with Fr Bernard Lonergan SJ', 178-9. On pre-Vatican II theological and philosophical style, see Q. Quesnell, 'A Note on Scholasticism', in *The Desires of the Human Heart: An Introduction to the Theology of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. V. Gregson (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 144-149.
[6] For example M. Gerhart, 'Bernard Lonergan's "Law of the Cross": Transforming the Sources and Effects of Violence', *Theological Studies* 77, 1 (2016), 77-95; J. Higgins, 'Redemption', in *The Desires of the Human Heart: An Introduction to the Theology of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. V. Gregson (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 201 - 221; W. P. Loewe, 'Lonergan and the Law of the Cross: A Universalist View of

publication of *De Verbo Incarnato*, as more personal and forward looking than would have been permitted in the classroom.[7]

Further, we note that Lonergan's work on the atonement was completed before his breakthrough to functional specialties in 1965. There may be hints of a new Christology and view of atonement in later works, as Crowe suggests,[8] but for the purposes of this work, we will focus on extant, completed works rather than fragments. We shall start with the 1958 lecture before discussing Thesis 17.

6.2.2 The Redemption

The lecture was delivered in September 1958. At about the same time Lonergan was delivering courses including the theology of the redemption at the Gregorian University.[9] Lonergan was also exploring theological method. He had started with hermeneutical method in Chapter 17 of *Insight*,[10] and developed this thinking in a number of courses between 1959 and 1963 – *De Intellectu et Methodo*, *De Systemate et Historia* and *De Methodo Theologiae*.[11] It is therefore reasonable and perhaps interesting to discuss Lonergan's writing on redemption with reference, not only to *Method in Theology* and its functional specialisms, but with one of these earlier works, *De Intellectu et Methodo* (DiM), outlined previously (Section 5.1) which is roughly contemporaneous (1959) with the lecture.

Initially, in DiM, we have to assemble data to provide phantasms. This is achieved through communication. Lonergan regards the whole of the incarnation as an act of communication. The second person of the Trinity assumed human nature; humans express themselves through the flesh. The fact of the incarnation and the act of Redemption are the supreme instances of God communicating with us in this life. This is a personal communication; each person has to meditate on it and take from the mystery the fruit that suits them. Lonergan is following Ignatius Loyola here; the giver of the *Spiritual Exercises* sets a framework; the recipient contemplates the given subject and owns any discovery they may make.[12] There is, Lonergan says, no theory or analysis that mediates between Christ's act and the individual soul. An individual apprehension of the word of Christ is incomplete. This does not mean it is wrong, although it can tend to be narrow and static and then it can be mistaken. The role of theology

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Salvation', *Anglican Theological Review* 59, 2 (1977), 162-174; R. Moloney, SJ, 'Lonergan's Soteriology', *Irish Theological Quarterly* 78, 1 (2013), 19-37.

[7] F. E. Crowe, *Christ and History: The Christology of Bernard Lonergan from 1935 to 1982*, (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2015), 126.

[8] Crowe, *Christ and History*, 165.

[9] Lonergan, 'The Redemption', 3, fn 1.

[10] Lonergan, *Insight*."608-16

[11] Lonergan, *Theological Method 2*, xvii.

[12] Ignatius of Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola*, (Wheathampstead, Herts: Anthony Clarke, 1973), Section 2, p 12-3.

is to attempt to offer a total view, with the aim of indicating ways of development and growth.[13]

In *Method*, the functional specialty Communications is the last. However, the fruits of communication are the data, the subject of Research for another historian or theologian.[14] The act of communication of the incarnation, therefore, constitutes the data for theological reflection, the objects for our understanding.

It is important for Lonergan in DiM to be assured that the act of understanding is possible, that a concept may be formed. Thus he spends some time discussing the intelligibility of the redemption.[15] If we take a view on redemption, an act of understanding is entailed and what is grasped is an intelligibility. The intelligibility of the redemption is a complex mystery. Firstly Lonergan notes that intelligibility does not mean redemption is a necessity. He claims that the early Protestants, especially Calvin, affirmed that God in his justice could not possibly forgive our sins unless Christ became man, suffered and died. Further, Calvin required that Christ also suffered the punishment of the damned, because he descended into Hell. This idea, Lonergan suggests, can be traced back to Anselm. The Catholic tradition, Lonergan asserts, is that there are many ways in which God could redeem apart from the suffering and death of Christ. The redemption is not a necessity, like 2 plus 2 making 4. It is more like understanding the law of gravity, which could be different but is not.[16] Redemption is contingent; it could have been done differently. The study of how it did happen is Lonergan's functional specialty of History.

The redemption transforms death, the penalty for sin, into a means of salvation. Thus redemption is not a deductive intelligibility but a dialectical one. Sin leads to death but death, through Christ, is the means of salvation. The conditions of the world continue even though the Messiah has come, but this continuance is the means of our proceeding to eternal life.[17]

The intelligibility of the redemption is not abstract but incarnate. Christ crucified is not just a symbol, but a real death. In Christ's death punishment is transfigured into satisfaction. Lonergan quotes Aquinas that if Christ is our friend then, as a friend, we suffer for his suffering. We sorrow for our sins because we contemplate Christ's sufferings for us, and these sufferings are a cause for our love of God.[18] This, Lonergan says, is something that can be seen to occur

[13] Lonergan, 'The Redemption', 5-7.
[14] Lonergan, *Method*, 143.
[15] Lonergan, *Theological Method 2*, 137.
[16] Lonergan, 'The Redemption', 8-9.
[17] Lonergan, 'The Redemption', 10.
[18] T. Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, (New York: Hanover House, 1955-7), 3, c 158, paras 6,7. Lonergan translates very freely. See also Lonergan, *The Redemption*, 240-3. He references there Aquinas, *Summa*

only when flesh and spirit are united in a single being; thus the intelligibility is concrete, incarnate.[19] The act of understanding, as required by DiM, is possible and assured. In terms of Lonergan's later method, this is in the area of Interpretation.

The intelligibility of redemption does not fall into a single pattern. It is complex; Lonergan uses the analogy of complex numbers in mathematics. So long as we remember which part is real and which imaginary all is well. Similarly, sin is unintelligible; it is not something for which a reason can be given; it is the irrationality of a rational creature, a surd.[20] Aquinas states that God neither wills evil to be done, nor not to be done, but wills to permit evil to be done.[21] The redemption can only be thought about by including the irrationality of sin. It regards sin, presupposes it and is the transformation of the situation created by sin. The redemption then is complex. 'Consequently, in a consideration of the redemption one has to have in mind the existence not of a simple intelligibility but of the transcendent intelligibility of God meeting the unintelligibility of sin'.[22] Lonergan seems to mean not that God is intelligible to us, but He is omniscient. The functional specialties in use here are Interpretation and also Systematics, seeing how the doctrines work together.

Lonergan thinks that the redemption is a multiple intelligibility. It cannot fit into a single formula. Aquinas notes that there are many reasons for the incarnation beyond our apprehension.[23] Aquinas' discussion of the redemption selects five different aspects, not a single formula.[24] Lonergan briefly analyses these aspects (sacrifice, merit, redemption, satisfaction and efficiency), although he does not follow Aquinas' order. He wishes to ask how they can be brought into one view. This can be interpreted as contradicting what he has said about there not being a single formula for the redemption. The editors argue that this is a conflict of aspects of thought growing towards unity rather than between two fixed positions. Aquinas left his understanding spread over the five aspects; Lonergan is oriented towards a unity, however imperfectly achieved. They claim that Lonergan achieved this unity by way of his 'law of the Cross'.[25] We can interpret Lonergan's activity here as examining the aspects for their coherence, hence, perhaps as an aspect of the functional specialty Systematics, or the

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Theologica, 1.2, q. 28, aa 1,2; Aristotle, 'Nicomachean Ethics', IX, 1166a 31, 1169b 6, pp 1843, 1848; Augustine, *Confessions*, (London: Penguin, 1961), IV, 6.

[19] Lonergan, 'The Redemption', 10-1.

[20] A surd is an irrational number such as $\sqrt{2}$; Lonergan uses it to denote irrationality in general. See Lonergan, *Insight*, 45-6, 255.

[21] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1, q 19 a 9, ad 3m.

[22] Lonergan, 'The Redemption', 12.

[23] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 3 q 1 a 2, r.

[24] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 3 q 48 a 1-5. Lonergan, 'The Redemption', 13.

[25] Lonergan, 'The Redemption', 14.

DiM precept of understand systematically. We note that the activity is misplaced with respect to the methods (Table 5.1 and Table 5.2).

Lonergan notes that the death of Christ is conceived as sacrifice.[26] Above all, he notes, the Epistle to the Hebrews presents the concept. The precise nature of the sacrifice depends on the meaning of *hilaskesthai*.[27] Lonergan observes that there are two meanings of the word – classical Greek (placate the gods) and Septuagint (something that removes sin). He is therefore in the functional specialty of Interpretation. Lonergan also observes that there is a connection from sacrifice, through ritual to liturgy. This does not mean that Christ's sacrifice was only a ritual act; the meaning of the reality cannot be thus exhausted.[28]

There are a number of Greek words used for aspects of 'redemption', indicating concepts such as ransom, remission of sins and redemption. In the Hebrew tradition redemption is primarily liberation, not a financial transaction. There is also a connotation from the pagan marketplace, buying and selling slaves. This too is the functional specialty of Interpretation, moving into History when Lonergan notes that Origen conceived this as the death of Christ liberating us from the devil.[29] Lonergan admits that not all the ways this is expressed are defensible but suggests that it does give the devil his role, while not making God demand the suffering and death of Jesus. This, Lonergan says, is compatible with the New Testament in that it was the chief priests, Pharisees, Judas, Herod, Pilate and the evildoer's hatred of the light that led to Jesus' death, and the Father caused the resurrection. Further, the marketplace context of redemption in Origen's interpretation has the merit of thinking of Christ's suffering and death as the work of the devil. Again, Lonergan argues that this is the New Testament view, and it expresses in terms of images and persons the truth that redemption is concerned with sin and sin is not intelligible.[30] Lonergan seems to conflate Interpretation and History here or, from DiM, the precepts of 'understand systematically', 'reverse counter-positions' and 'develop positions' are being used.

Lonergan divides vicarious satisfaction into two steps: vicarious suffering and vicarious satisfaction. The first is clear: Christ acted for us and suffered for us. He links this to the Servant Songs in Isaiah, 1 Peter 2:20-25 and Romans 4:25. This is interpreted as the vicarious satisfaction of Christ by Anselm. 'Satisfaction' refers to personal sins and post-absolution

[26] 1 Cor 5:7; Eph 5:2; 1 Cor 11:24-5.
[27] Lonergan references C. H. Dodd, '*Hilaskesthai*, Its Cognates, Derivatives, and Synonyms, in the Septuagint', *The Journal of Theological Studies* 32, 128 (1931), 352-360. The volume and year is incorrect in the text.
[28] Lonergan, 'The Redemption', 15-6.
[29] Lonergan, 'The Redemption', 18. Compare with Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 581.
[30] Lonergan, 'The Redemption', 17-9.

penance. Lonergan observes that the sinner whose sins have been absolved must still do penance, as the Council of Trent declared. He contrasts this with Lutherans who, he says, by denying good works deny satisfaction for sin after remission of sin. The word 'vicarious' was applied to the satisfaction of Christ only in the nineteenth century, and so the phrase 'vicarious satisfaction' is relatively new to the church.[31] This section falls into the functional specialties of Interpretation, the atonement is interpreted in terms of biblical data, and History, regarding development from the early church through to the nineteenth century. In DiM it probably falls into the precept 'understand systematically' which includes historical development.

The doctrine of satisfaction is implicitly Catholic, Lonergan claims. We might expect this to focus on the functional specialty of Doctrines, but Lonergan starts with the Council of Trent which suggests a similarity between the satisfaction of Christ for our sins and our own satisfaction for them. This is thus History.

Satisfaction is in the context of contrition and confession. The acts of the penitent are contrition, confession and satisfaction. Lonergan quotes Romans 8:3-4, noting that God has condemned sin in the flesh of Christ. The sufferings of Christ express God's detestation of sin. The Word made flesh loved his Father above all things and loved us. Christ loved both his Father and us, his Father's enemies. His detestation of sin, therefore, caused him sorrow; because of his perfect knowledge and love of his Father he could detest sin as it is to be detested, in a way that we cannot. Christ accepted his sufferings to provide a means to communicate his love for us and his detestation of sin and his sorrow for our sins. This links back to the part of the *Summa Contra Gentiles* Lonergan previously quoted: the suffering of a friend can cause in us great sorrow.[32] Lonergan switches here between the functional specialties of Research, quoting Scripture, Interpretation, explaining the meaning of the Romans passage, Doctrines, as he has an eye on what he wishes to explain, and Systematics, trying to resolve any conflict between different doctrines. We could also argue therefore that Dialectics is involved, although Lonergan does not provide any counter-positions here to resolve as the other views mentioned, such as those of Luther, are not discussed here.

Lonergan deals with the merit of Christ and efficiency of his death and resurrection much more briefly. From the Council of Trent and Romans 5:19 Lonergan observes that Christ's obedience is Christ's merit. A merit is a good act worthy of recompense and so, as by Christ's obedience we are saved, Lonergan concludes that there is an element of merit in the relationship of

[31] Lonergan, 'The Redemption', 20-1.
[32] Lonergan, 'The Redemption', 19-23.

Christ's free act and our salvation.[33] Jesus's efficiency is more than intercession. Lonergan divides it into two - what Christ does in heaven and what he did in history in founding a Church. This section is a conflation of the functional specialties of Interpretation, Doctrines and Systematics.

Having examined the aspects of redemption, Lonergan wants to suggest how to reach a total view. He is therefore undertaking the functional specialty of Systematics. The fundamental category is mystery, in the sense of the secret counsel, or plan, of God. The divine plan is presented in a number of ways – as the kingdom of God, the establishment of the kingdom of Israel which led to messianic expectations, the body of Christ and, possibly, the foundation of the Church. This is expressed in a series of antitheses. Our life in Christ is the antithesis of the old law. There is the antithesis of the first and second Adam. Similarly, there is the antithesis between the world, darkness, law and sin and life, truth, grace and light. The general antithesis runs through the New Testament. There is illustration, application and realisation in the text. We can possibly see an example here of the positions being developed and the counter-positions being reversed in these antitheses, and hence as Dialectics in the later method.

Suffering as retribution is present but is not the only meaning. Lonergan quotes the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:43-8, 5: 11-2; 5:38-40) and also the incident with the sons of Zebedee (Matt 20:24-8) as examples to show that the New Testament gives a clue to the meaning of the redemption. 'It is the victory of suffering, of accepting the consequences of sin, the evils of this world, in the spirit that animated Christ. It is the transformation of the world that arose when evil is transformed into good by the Christian spirit.'[34] We too are to overcome evil with good (Rom 12: 21).

Lonergan is struggling here with multiple meanings which he thinks can be reduced to one, or at least be made subordinate to an overarching meaning. This is the functional specialty of Systematics. His struggle seems to be as a result of his view of doctrine as being one truth once given to the Church, albeit in a given context. If this assumption is removed, we have a less neat but perhaps more accurate picture of atonement. We also note that in developing his discussion, Lonergan does not seem to follow either DiM or *Method*.

At the end of the lecture, Lonergan does not form a decisive judgment about the mystery of redemption. He thinks that the overarching view is that of his 'law of the cross', the transformation of evil into good. This is hinted at in the references to Matthew and Romans above. It is to this aspect of Lonergan's thought on atonement that we now turn.

[33] Lonergan, 'The Redemption', 23.
[34] Lonergan, 'The Redemption', 28.

6.2.3 The Law of the Cross

Thesis 17 of *De Verbo Incarnato* states:

> This is why the Son of God became man, suffered, died, and was raised again: because divine wisdom has ordained and divine goodness has willed, not to do away with the evils of the human race through power, but to convert those same evils to a supreme good according to the just and mysterious Law of the Cross.[35]

Higgins notes that Lonergan seeks an understanding of the redemption beyond his interpretation of the satisfaction theories. This is not drawn from technical theology but from the lived tradition of the church through worship, spirituality and reading Scripture. That said, the central concept of this understanding, 'fittingness', is a component in Aquinas.[36] Higgins suggests that 'scientific' theologians skip over this concept with distain, but Lonergan does not.[37] Theologians certainly do not focus on this aspect of atonement, nor Aquinas' comments on it. Davies does not mention it,[38] and nor do Grudem, Rashdall, Aulen, Sykes, Mann or Green.[39] The idea is mentioned but not developed by Davison.[40] It certainly seems that this aspect of the atonement is under-represented in the literature.

Lonergan notes that while Aquinas' method is praiseworthy, his question is slightly different. Aquinas is asking about the fittingness of the incarnation; Lonergan has extended that to obtain an analogical and imperfect understanding of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus.[41]

There is a great deal of background assumed in the thesis. Lonergan's treatise on the Trinity indicates that the one incarnated is the one sent by the Father for redemption. Lonergan notes that the solution to the problem of evil has matter, form and end. Suitable ways of producing salvation are specified in other doctrines such as on sin, grace, the virtues and church. These are presupposed here. However, there also needs to be an agent, the cause of redemption, and who he is, how he is qualified and how he proceeds to the end need considering in order to grasp the fittingness of the suffering, death and resurrection of the Son of God. This agent is

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[35] Lonergan, *The Redemption*, 197.
[36] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, III, q 1, 2.
[37] Higgins, 'Redemption', 213.
[38] B. Davies, *Aquinas: An Introduction*, (London: Continuum, 2002).
[39] J. B. Green and M. D. Baker, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts*, (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003); H. Rashdall, *The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology*, (London: Macmillan, 1925), 374-8; S. Sykes, *The Story of Atonement*, (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1997); G. Aulen, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement*, (London: SPCK, 1931), 109; A. Mann, *Atonement for a 'Sinless' Society: Engaging with an Emerging Culture*, (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2005).
[40] A. Davison, *The Love of Wisdom: An Introduction to Philosophy for Theologians*, (London: SCM, 2013), 110.
[41] Lonergan, *The Redemption*, 216-9.

further specified in the earlier theses of *De Verbo Incarnato*.[42] In DiM this is the precept 'understand systematically', in *Method* it is Systematics, drawing doctrines together. Systematics is a later part of Lonergan's Method, but is appearing early in his discussion here.

Lonergan summarises the argument for his Law of the Cross in a 1966 lecture.[43] On the basis of the argument in *Insight*,[44] he suggests that human history is a matter of progress and decline and its redemption is effected by faith, hope and charity (Section 3.2.4). Evil is perpetuated by even-handed justice; charity is required to wipe the slate clean. Transcendent hope is needed to remove any human prop to redemption. Faith is required to provide a higher viewpoint where intelligence and reason can be seen to be relevant to human waywardness. This analysis accords with Lonergan's view of Scriptural doctrine. He seems to be using the functional specialty of Doctrines.

In the lecture he specifies the doctrine in a series of headings and Scriptural references. This is spelt out in a little more detail in Thesis 17. Firstly, sin is universal (Rom 1:18-3:20) and we are in bondage to sin (Rom 7:14-24) and are children of wrath (Eph 2:3). The penalty for sin is death (Gen 2:17; 3:19; Wisdom 2:24; Rom 5:12; 6:22-3).[45] Lonergan here is assembling data (the functional specialty of Research) and starting to interpret it. This continues with the second point in Thesis 17 (the third in the lecture), that sin and death in Adam is succeeded by redemption and grace in Christ (1 Cor 15:20-2; Rom 5:12-21). This, Lonergan says, is the transformation of death itself. Christ died with a view to rising again (John 10:17; Phil 2:9-10; Heb 2:9). This transformation of death to life was for Christ's sake and for ours (Rom 4:25; Heb 2:14-5; Rom 5:10; Eph 1:7; Col 1:14; Titus 2:14; Eph 5:25-7). The transformation of death was for the goods of the body as well as the spirit (Phil 1:21; 1 Cor 15:54). Thus we express creedal faith in the resurrection of the body.[46] In this section Lonergan seems to have added a doctrine. He seems to working within the functional specialties of Systematics, Doctrine, Interpretation and Research at the same time.

In Thesis 17, Lonergan notes that the transformation of death has twofold significance: for Christ as individual man and as head of his body. In these ways there are two aspects. Christ's voluntary acceptance of evil or punishment and the subsequent blessing of the Father. Thus we find Christ as an individual accepting the chalice (Matt 26:38-44), suffering many evils (Matt 26:45-27:50) and then being raised from the dead by the Father (Rom 8:11), exalted

[42] Higgins, 'Redemption'. Lonergan, *The Redemption*, 222-3.
[43] Lonergan, 'Transition', 9-10.
[44] Lonergan, *Insight*, 8.
[45] Lonergan, 'Transition', 9. Lonergan, *The Redemption*, 222-3.
[46] Lonergan, 'Transition', 10. Lonergan, *The Redemption*, 224-5.

(Phil 2:9) and being crowned with glory (Heb 2:9).[47] Here we seem to move backwards through the method, somewhat. We start with a doctrine and finish up with the data from Scripture. Within DiM he is still working in 'understand systematically'.

Secondly, through Christ's obedience many would be made just (Rom 5:19). He gives his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45; Matt 20:28) and is a fragrant offering and sacrifice (Eph 5:2). Universal effects flow from all of this from the Father through the mediator, his Son, which constitute the redemption 'as end' in this life and that to come. The data is assembled to prove the doctrine; there is no methodological problem with this, but it does indicate that the setting of the theological question is different to Research. The effects include forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; Eph 1:7; Col 1:14), reconciliation (Rom 5:10; 2 Cor 5:19) and justification (Rom 3:24, 28; 5:1; 8:1; 1 Cor 6:11).[48]

Higgins observes that, 'The entire story of redemption bristles with difficulties as soon as one ceases merely to treat it as a story and tries to give a reasonable account of what it was, why it was necessary, how it worked, what makes it effective'.[49] Lonergan, in both lecture and Thesis 17, has deployed many verses of Scripture in ones and twos to prove his points. In doing so he has, perhaps, assembled the data of the problem (the functional specialty Research) and has provided interpretation of that data. It has to be said, however, that this has been done in the light of an assumed doctrine. The basic problem with this approach seems to be that when the narrative elements are removed, we are left with a series of assertions and propositions. These may, or may not, cohere; the absence of narrative structure makes the task of ensuring coherence more difficult. This is discussed further below (Section 7.2).

The problem is, perhaps, the treatment of redemption as 'merely' a story. Once the narrative nature of the redemption is lost, it can become a sequence of propositions, each of which may be assented to but which lack links and structure. Further, while in his method Lonergan considers that study of the history of a doctrine is as important as study of the doctrine itself, here he does not undertake that. The history of the development of the doctrine would also aid understanding and the intelligibility of redemption. Thus far, Lonergan's presentation of redemption seems lacking, by his own methodical standards.

[47] Lonergan, *The Redemption*, 226-7. The reader is referred for further exposition to B. J. F. Lonergan, *The Incarnate Word*, (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2016), 72-77. This is part of Thesis 1 of *De Verbo Incarnato*.
[48] Lonergan, *The Redemption*, 226-7.
[49] Higgins, 'Redemption', 203.

There may be a number of reasons for this lack of method. *De Verbo Incarnato* was a teaching manual, and the way of teaching is different from the way of discovery.[50] Some of the earlier theses in the manual do give outlines of the history of a doctrine.[51] Other manuals do give extensive historical coverage.[52] Aside from mentioning the views of various theologians down the ages as part of its argument, Thesis 17 does not give a historical overview. From this analysis, Lonergan does not seem to be following either an earlier method or that which he developed post-1965.

6.2.4 Conclusion

Lonergan's views on the atonement are hardly surprising, although perhaps his concept of the 'Law of the Cross' is less widespread. It does, however, derive from Aquinas and can hardly be described as in any way unorthodox. It is more surprising that, in some of his writings on the atonement, especially Thesis 17 of *De Verbo Incarnato*, no particular method seems to be followed.

In his lecture on the Redemption, Lonergan does roughly follow an earlier method, as we have observed. He seeks an overall view of the atonement having described the five different aspects of it that Aquinas outlines. However, he reaches no particular conclusion as to how these aspects interact nor which, if any, is to be preferred. He seems to concede that this is a mystery and leave the discussion at that. It is possible that he views the concept of fittingness in his Law of the Cross as being the best aspect of the atonement to be considered, but it is not entirely clear how this view relates to the others.

We can identify many of the different precepts and functional specialties in Lonergan's theology, but they do not necessarily follow in the order specified by either DiM or *Method*. The functional specialties seem to give an accurate picture of the elements of theology, but the way they fit together is not that of *Method*. This suggests that Lonergan's project related to theological method is flawed, in that his stated method is too rigid in terms of the ordering of functional specialties for practical use. We suggest below (Chapter 7) that Lonergan's method can be generalised to provide a grammar by which we can discuss how theology is done.

Lonergan's overall view, therefore, seems to be that there is a single, intelligible truth regarding the redemption, but that we have not obtained it as yet. This would fit in with his view that there is a meaning, a single intelligible truth behind every doctrine. This truth was

[50] Lonergan, *Method*, 319.
[51] For example Thesis 5, Lonergan, *The Incarnate Word*, 321-5. Also Thesis 12, p 603-5.
[52] Especially Lonergan, *The Triune God: Doctrines*, 29-255.

given to the church and accurately expressed in the context of the time. It is up to us to understand as best we can that context and translate that expression of the truth into an equivalent one for our time.

6.3 Ramsey on Atonement

Ramsey views atonement theologies as means of telling stories which may give a cosmic disclosure setting to the Crucifixion. We discern God's activity in the Cross, and are aware of a matching change in ourselves.[53] Anyone, Ramsey notes, Christian or not, could believe that Jesus of Nazareth was 'crucified … under Pontius Pilate, suffered and was buried'. This creedal phrase is important for the Christian because it relates to their context, in the setting of the Church. This is the point of the Nicene Creed phrase that adds 'for us'. The Crucifixion was 'an occasion suitably odd', in this light, to enable the development of Christian doctrine. It is not a straightforward fact.[54]

Ramsey suggests that Christians explicated the meaning of the Crucifixion by means of models. Around and from these models came doctrines of the atonement. These allowed articulation of what God did, somehow, through Jesus on the Cross. The list of models is impressive: justification, substitution, satisfaction, reconciliation, redemption, propitiation and expiation.[55]

Ramsey approaches the issue of the atonement by commenting that contemporaries were arguing that philosophical reasoning was not to be assimilated to mathematical and experimental reasoning, and that Black had defended the idea of metaphor against the claim that a metaphor is not an argument.[56] Ramsey's point of comparison is Rashdall who, writing on Irenaeus, claims that it is hard to tell where metaphor ends and 'sober fact' begins, and that in Irenaeus' mind 'analogies do duty for reasons, for arguments, for thought'.[57] Ramsey's point is that theologians of the atonement need to realise the significance and logical status of the metaphors and model used. Failure to do this, Ramsey thinks, has led to logical blunders and Christian scandal, such as asking in the ransom model 'who was paid?'[58]

Ramsey here is following his implicit method. Firstly, he has set out a contemporary problem, that of how reasoning is used in theology and philosophy and whether theology deals in metaphors. Secondly he has pointed to the problems that a lack of understanding of the

[53] Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 35.
[54] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 126-7.
[55] Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 35. Ramsey does not intend the list to be exhaustive.
[56] Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 28.
[57] Rashdall, *Idea of Atonement*, 246, 237.
[58] Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 29, 42.

nature of models and metaphors can produce. Ramsey's thrust therefore goes beyond the interpretation of the atonement to how theology is to be done.

Ramsey's interest is in how the doctrines of the atonement have arisen over time. He is drawing on his stages of 'evidence' and 'historical formulations'. He starts with the kerygma of the apostles, noting that they referred to the Crucifixion only indirectly. It was presupposed as a necessary preliminary to the raising of Jesus (Acts 2:36).[59] Ramsey is assuming that Luke faithfully reports the teaching of the apostles; his point is that for the early church the Crucifixion, and hence how the atonement worked, was of peripheral interest.

Ramsey notes that there is more interest in the Crucifixion shown by the centurion at the foot of the Cross. In Mark he is quoted as saying 'truly this man was the Son of God' (Mark 15:39, RSV). Ramsey suggests that the incident as recorded in the other Synoptic gospels indicates an increasing interest in the criteria of the centurion's disclosure.[60] Matthew refers to an earthquake and Luke to darkness; both describe the tearing of the temple curtain. Even though the centurion obtained a cosmic disclosure around these events, Ramsey says, this does not detract from his point that the early church was little interested in the Crucifixion. Indeed, Ramsey suggests that as the Cross was a stumbling block for Jews, the church needed to find a way of presenting the Crucifixion whereby Jews could obtain a cosmic disclosure around it.[61]

Ramsey suggests that his primary question has now become: how is the Crucifixion made the occasion of a cosmic disclosure, and how does it provoke the traditional models explicating its significance? His 'evidence' now becomes the models and metaphors used describe the cosmic disclosure; he follows a historical trajectory, starting with Paul. He is seeking the themes in the language describing the original disclosure, his historical formulations stage.

Paul, Ramsey argues, has two answers to this question. Firstly, Ramsey thinks that 1 Corinthians 15:3 refers to the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53. There is thus a matching between the Crucifixion and the servant, as well as a sufficient mismatch, and a disclosure can occur. The Crucifixion takes on a significance of its own and also provides models for further explication. The Suffering Servant shall 'make many to be accounted righteous' (Is 53:11, RSV) and hence yields a model of justification.[62]

[59] Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 30.
[60] Matt 27:54; Luke 23:47.
[61] Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 30-1.
[62] Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 32-3.

Secondly, Ramsey discusses Paul's ideas of the Remnant. Paul, Ramsey asserts, had to allow the Jewish Law a place in God's purposes. God has not rejected his people but has chosen a remnant by grace (Rom 11:1-5). The doctrine of the Remnant creates another disclosure around the Crucifixion through the idea that the number of the faithful declines over time to the point of Crucifixion, where it consists of one person – Jesus. Then the process is reversed; the new Israel is the Christian Church.[63] Jesus on the Cross is continuous with the old Israel and the new. He is the unique point person. This second story can yield another cosmic disclosure.[64]

Paul, then, tells stories about the Crucifixion that 'set it in a cosmic disclosure'. We discern God's activity in the cross and respond. Paul gives us a model of atonement, of viewing the Crucifixion with the eye of faith, and from such models the doctrine was developed. The models multiply, leading to doctrines of substitution, satisfaction, reconciliation, redemption, propitiation and expiation. The question then arises of the context of these models and doctrines, and also of their interaction.[65] At this stage, Ramsey has shown how Paul's cosmic disclosure is cast into a model; he is now ready to pursue further historical formulations and see how they may be re-interpreted as qualified models for today.

We note Ramsey has switched from 'story' to 'model'. Beirne observes that Christian experience had to be told, initially at least, in ordinary language. This led to 'mixed' phrases, such as 'Saviour' and 'Author of Life'. Making these consistent led to the development of doctrine.[66] Ramsey notes that the distinctive and unique disclosure, the empirical basis of Christian doctrine, has to be evoked in understandable language. Thus Peter in his Acts speeches uses a riotous mix of phrases, not concerned with the logical relations between them.[67] The stories were told; it was only later that models and doctrines took over.

We can view this shift, perhaps, as one from a dynamic to a static view of theology. Thus McFague can suggest that Ramsey understands models as qualified definitions of God, descriptions of the divine nature. McFague criticises Ramsey for a more static, substance-oriented and descriptive view of models.[68] However Ramsey seems to be doing something slightly different, accounting for how we have arrived at certain doctrines, rather than proposing those doctrines as static views of God. While he does not emphasise particularly the

[63] Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 34.
[64] Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 34-5.
[65] Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 35.
[66] Beirne, *Logic of Disclosures*, 88.
[67] Acts 3:31-5; Acts 2:36; Acts 5:30-1. Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 153-4.
[68] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 124.

rootedness of the models in stories, he tells many stories in the hope of evoking disclosures in his hearers and readers. Ramsey's view is a little more dynamic than McFague seems to allow.

Ramsey discusses the model of justification and its contexts in Romans 3:21-6. Relying on Dodd, he observes that there are two law-court models that interlock, the Hebrew, whereby justification is an act whereby the wronged person is given their rights, vindicated and delivered; second, there is a Greek model of acquittal of the guilty.[69] These two interact; the Hebrew discourse can be said to correct the more dominant Greek.[70]

Ramsey views Dodd's exegesis of this passage as an excellent demonstration of how logically circumspect we must be in building up theological discourse from models. Ramsey notes that, with the Greek model, the 'stop-card' of the immorality of acquitting the guilty can be played. Dodd admits that this is a paradox and that it might make the legal model useless, but that there is value in the paradox itself. 'When the prisoner at the bar has no case, all he can do is throw himself on the mercy of the court.'[71] Effort, according to Ramsey, must be expended to avoid inconsistencies, minimize strains and avoid moral difficulties.

Ramey notes that the model of justification, his second historical formulation, has been given elaborate articulation. Thus, dovetailed with the substitution model we obtain Jesus suffering in our stead. But this adds difficulties, such as transferred guilt and leads to 'frontier clashes' with the language of morals. Alternatively, justification has been dovetailed with the satisfaction model, based on ideas from feudalism whereby God's honour as overlord has to be satisfied before restoration, before humans could be acquitted and this satisfaction was made by Jesus on the cross. Ramsey notes that this may not be compatible with the 'Chalcedonian rules for talking about God'. Developing models tends to run into 'heavy logical weather'.[72]

There are the other models to cover. Ramsey notes that the reconciliation model derives from Romans 5:10 and this is in the context of financial transactions. The auditors have harmonized the accounts. The cross effected something similar. The model is less problematic than justification but does not yield a close interpretation, although the development of the model can head in the wrong direction and talk of reconciling God to humans, rather than the other way around.[73]

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[69] C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1959), 76.
[70] Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 36.
[71] Dodd, *Romans*, 76-7. Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 37-8.
[72] Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 39-40.
[73] Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 40-1.

The model of redemption arises from Galatians 3:13; we are redeemed from the curse of the Law. The context is that of a slave being redeemed. Again, development of this model can lead to problems, with questions (and answers) such as 'to whom was the ransom paid?' and 'from who were we redeemed?' Answers such as 'the Devil' lead to further speculations and difficulties.

These models all arise in a historical context and Ramsey tries to describe that in sufficient detail for us to be able to see how the models can both point back to the original disclosure and also be misinterpreted in a different context. This is related to his stage of historical formulations and their interpretations.

The problem with models is to make them consistent with the rest of our discourse about God, Ramsey suggests. The propitiation model, whereby Christ's death is a gift to appease an offended person, might suggest that God is a deranged megalomaniac. Similarly the model of expiation, interpreting Christ's death as a penalty paid for our wrongdoing runs into a moral or Trinitarian stop-card. How can the death of an innocent man for other, guilty humans be moral or just? How can it be compatible with the Chalcedonian definition?[74] He is posing the contemporary questions regarding atonement.

Ramsey has two issues with the models of atonement and their development. They can be useful, he admits, but the nature of models is to be incomplete. Stop-cards have to be played at some point, and he thinks that in terms of theories of atonement, they are not played soon enough. Secondly, he thinks that discourse about the models – satisfaction, justification and so on – is such that we may start to suppose we were discussing the procedure of the atonement, not models at all.[75]

Ramsey thinks that the Epistle to the Hebrews might offer a more promising model. It is aimed at both Jew and Gentile and provides currency for a cosmic disclosure around the Crucifixion. It marries sacrificial and metaphysical language. Paul's models play little part, and its interest is in the ritual and sacrificial side; Christ's death is symbolised and hinted at by the old law of ritual and sacrifice.[76] The old ritual, according to Rashdall, is a parable referring to the present time.[77] Ramsey understands it as a parable occurring as a model in a cosmic disclosure.[78] From

[74] Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 42-3.
[75] Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 44.
[76] Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 44-5; Rashdall, *Idea of Atonement*, 154.
[77] Hebrews 9:9, Rashdall, *Idea of Atonement*, 154. The Greek word is parabolē: D. Guthrie, *Hebrews*, (Leicester: IVP, 1983), 183-4.
[78] Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 45.

a different basis of Scriptural evidence, Ramsey re-addresses the problems and restarts his theological process.

Rashdall notes that the author of Hebrews makes the most of the details of comparisons between the old and new sacrifice.[79] Similarities and differences are matched and, according to Ramsey, this is a way of evoking a disclosure.[80] It is a cosmic disclosure for both Jew and Christian. For the Jew sacrificial language was already currency for God. For both Jews and Gentiles, there is a metaphysical story which matches the sacrifice of the Hebrew High Priest and the crucifixion.[81] Ramsey notes that for the Jew this is a second order disclosure, evoked by language already based in a disclosure. Similar second order disclosures occur between Old and New Testament language, for example in the 'fulfilment' of prophecy in Jesus (e.g. Matt 1:21). The prophecy was an original disclosure; the fulfilment is a further disclosure. Ramsey notes that there is a gap between prophetic language and the situation in which it is used. Again, a gap is needed if a disclosure is to be obtained. If the New Testament referred exactly to events the Old Testament describes, no second disclosure would occur, for the original disclosure would suffice and nothing new would be found.[82] Ramsey is seeking the original cosmic disclosure; then he can plug in his results to check his interpretation.

Ramsey suggests that the Epistle is designed to provide both Jew and Gentile with an opportunity of finding God in the crucifixion by a cosmic disclosure. He quotes Rashdall as commenting that the language of sacrificial terms is viewed as being symbolic and metaphysical. It is hard to know where metaphor ends and spiritual reality begins. The symbol, to the writer, was more than a symbol.[83] Ramsey comments that this could be because we have to use metaphorical language as currency for cosmic disclosure to speak of the transcendent and that discerned by 'the eye of faith'.[84]

Ramsey notes that the writer is loath to isolate one element of his model of sacrifice. The whole sacrificial discourse provides currency for a cosmic disclosure. Concepts should not be isolated from their context, and derivations from the model should be cautious.[85] Here again we see part of Ramsey's method, examining language for models and disclosures, and also his philosophical commitments. Even though he is a self-declared empiricist he still seeks out metaphysical meanings. His empiricism is not limited to materialism.

[79] Rashdall, *Idea of Atonement*, 154.
[80] Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 45, c.f. 15.
[81] Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 46.
[82] Ramsey, *Religious Language*, 119, 121.
[83] Rashdall, *Idea of Atonement*, 155, 159.
[84] Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 47.
[85] Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 48.

One of Ramsey's concerns is that a particular model should not be over developed. Doing so can lead to bogus and pointless controversy. As a case in point, he discusses the 'ransom' set of models, suggested by Mark 10:45. Following Rawlinson, Ramsey argues that ransom means monetary compensation for a crime or a life, or freeing a slave or captive. It also refers to the right to buy back land, the equivalent of a first born, the Levites (as equivalent for Israel as a whole) and the poll tax (a ransom for his life unto the Lord, Ex 30:12). There is also the idea of the death of righteous martyrs as compensation for the sins of the people (4 Macc 17:20-2).[86]

Given the cosmic disclosure around the crucifixion, a ransom model was likely to be useful currency for articulation. Thus Titus 2:14 refers to Jesus who ransomed us. Ransom models, Ramsey says, bring contexts where a ransom is paid by someone doing something, on behalf of someone who is ransomed from something for some purpose. In Titus the ransom is by Jesus dying for us who are ransomed from iniquity to be zealous of good works. As long as the model is developed in a moral context, Ramsey says, all is well.[87]

Ramsey follows a historical trajectory and moves on to early church models. This is the step relating to 'historical formulations' in his method (Table 5.4). He does this in conversation with Rashdall. This is partly because he regards Rashdall's work as 'definitive' and also because he thinks Rashdall belittled metaphors, and theologians of the atonement need to realise the significance and logical status of metaphor.[88] Rashdall provides Ramsey with examples from contemporary theology as to where theology has taken a wrong turn.

Ramsey observes that the *Epistle to Diognetus* follows the same sort of logic as Hebrews. A discourse around atonement is built around the models of justification and ransom. The disclosure basis of the Crucifixion is preserved in phrases largely moral and vocational.[89] Those suspicious of metaphor started to develop 'ransom' as a literal transaction. This generates bogus discourse and questions such as: Whom were we ransomed from? What was paid as a ransom? and so on. Rashdall observes that Irenaeus thought that Christ's death was the ransom paid to the Devil for our release.[90] Ramsey thinks this is a little unfair to Irenaeus, although he concedes that it can be logically misunderstood and generate pointless discussion. Ramsey is at his stage of historical formulations

[86] A. E. J. Rawlinson, *The Gospel According to St Mark with Introduction, Commentary, & Additional Notes.*, (London: Methuen, 1947), 147.
[87] Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 50.
[88] Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 28-9.
[89] Rashdall, *Idea of Atonement*, 215-6. Rashdall dates the Epistle to ca 150 AD.
[90] Rashdall, *Idea of Atonement*, 243.

Rashdall finds Irenaeus' doctrine of Recapitulation to be too vague to be useful.[91] Analogies do duty for reason, argument and thought.[92] Ramsey suggests that Irenaeus' parallels between a tree and the Cross, and death in us and our ancestors and so on is a pattern which evokes a cosmic disclosure with Christ as the limit concept. Rashdall, he suggests, mistakes descriptive misreading and erroneous development of Irenaeus' metaphors for the metaphors themselves and condemns them.[93]

To appreciate Irenaeus' doctrines of the atonement, Ramsey argues, we need to appreciate the status of models and metaphors in theological discussion. Doctrines of atonement exist to point us to a cosmic disclosure around the Cross. They are not official reports of a transaction in a cosmic market place. Not all thought has to be that of the accountant.[94]

For Ramsey, Tertullian stands accused of over-developing models, supposing the language was literally true and failing to plot his assertions back to their origin in disclosure. He summarises Tertullian as arguing that the Son placates God's wrath and satisfies His feudal honour, except for those who do not appropriate the benefits of Christ's death. Ramsey quotes Rashdall noting that Tertullian enriches the believer's joy of heaven by the prospect of the spectacle of their persecutors being tortured.[95]

Ramsey notes that Tertullian's 'heap of theologising' hides the treasure it meant to preserve. Tertullian failed to recall that every doctrine, including the doctrine of Hell, was designed as a pointer to God, not a description of the world. Answers to bogus questions turn out to be at best a hollow sham; failure to refer back to the original disclosure leads us to invent schemes we believe to be true, facts to fit those schemes and a whole pile of error and heresy.[96]

We have a multiplicity of models of the atonement, and so the question arises as to whether some are more reliable than others. Some, after all, have shown themselves to be capable of 'perilous articulation'. Further, Ramsey asks, is there a 'best model'? By this he means a model which can be associated with the 'data' from Scripture and the themes he has already discussed, and also which gives rise to the least number of bogus inferences.

Ramsey has been following elements of his method. He has described the evidence, the models, and how they have arisen in history. He has noted that these models can cause

[91] Rashdall, *Idea of Atonement*, 238. On Recapitulation see D. Minns, *Irenaeus: An Introduction*, (London: T & T Clark, 2010), 108-10.
[92] Rashdall, *Idea of Atonement*, 237.
[93] Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 54.
[94] Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 54-5. J. Wisdom, 'The Inaugural Address: A Feature of Wittgenstein's Technique', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes* 35 (1961), 1-14, 14.
[95] Rashdall, *Idea of Atonement*, 248-55, 253.
[96] Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 57.

problems in modern theology if they are not interpreted cautiously enough. He now provides a re-interpretation, an overall model within which the others fit, and he has to explain how the overall model will articulate the original cosmic disclosure. This is the stage of re-interpretation and plugging the result back into the original cosmic disclosure.

Ramsey thinks the best model is love. Rashdall's treatment of atonement shows how widely satisfactory the model is. It fits the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53; the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32); the self-sacrifice of Hebrews and the ransom stories. Why can we not leave the doctrine of the atonement there?[97]

An objection to Rashdall's treatment of the atonement is, Ramsey says, that it is too 'subjective'. The model 'in terms of love the doctrine of the atonement does not adequately articulate what God has done'. Ramsey notes that those models which give an 'objective' element, in the Tertullian tradition, are those that give rise to 'scandalous' discourse. But Ramsey admits that Rashdall's treatment has weaknesses. Rashdall does not make evident the cosmic character of the disclosure of love which Christians claim occurs around the Crucifixion; nor does he does make clear that the love of a good man is a model for God. [98]

To meet the criticism of Rashdall's treatment, then, we have to commend the model of love and make it clear that the subject of the activity is God. The Crucifixion has to be given a cosmic disclosure setting by discourse about love. An objective element will be found if the discourse has an empirical fit today. The better the fit, the more reasonable the claim will be. For example, if the model of love is embedded in a Remnant story, the claim for an objective element in the atonement will be more reliably made the more the Church proves to be an inclusive fellowship of the new Israel, the redeemed of God.[99]

Ramsey has completed his use of his own implicit method. He has re-interpreted the evidence in terms of an overall model, love, which fits the evidence and meets criticism of contemporary theologies of the atonement. The overall model allows us to be articulate about the cosmic disclosure given by the Crucifixion. Ramsey's argument is not without issues, particularly surrounding the objective element of the discourse and disclosure (Section 3.4.2), but he does follow his method consistently, even though the stages can be undertaken in different orders and repeated.

[97] Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 58.
[98] Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 59.
[99] Ramsey, *Christian Discourse*, 59-60.

6.3.1 Conclusion

We have seen in this case study elements of Ramsey's implicit theological method being shown, as well as his preoccupations with language and models. His method has referred him back, firstly, to Scripture. His use of Scripture is not particularly original, but he does regard it as being primary data and determinative for theology. His development of the themes he finds regarding the rage of Scriptural sources suggests that his hermeneutic is one of the whole of Scripture.

Ramsey develops his view of atonement in dialog with a more contemporary source, Rashdall. He is not uncritical of Rashdall's views, and thinks that Rashdall underestimates, or possibly ignores totally, the power of metaphor. Ramsey sees the Scriptural passages he uses as pointing towards a cosmic disclosure of what God is Christ was doing for us on the Cross. This is explicated in a variety of models.

Ramsey cautions that the models should not be developed as far as they can go. Caution is needed as a single model developed in a given direction can cause theological problems. He suggests Tertullian as an example of this, although examples can be multiplied. However, this does leave the problem for Ramsey of deciding which model or models are to be used and how far they are to be developed.

In this case, Ramsey chooses the model of love as the most satisfactory. He admits that this model does not remove all possibility of bogus inference and inarticulate discourse, but the model is the one that yields the best empirical fit, he believes, to the evidence. We note that this move is not forced. While it has been suggested that, in other circumstances, Ramsey is reluctant to choose a best model, here he has done so.[100] But Ramsey also argues by analogy from the use of models in science. Scientific models have a range of applicability, usually given by the approximations required to make them tractable. Much effort in the science is then devoted, in the first place to validation, and subsequently, theoretically, to extending the range of applicability and experimentally testing the applicability of the models at the boundaries of their range.

Science, therefore, retains a range of models, often describing similar situations, with differing ranges of application. Science is interested in how the models meet and interact, but is not particularly interested in promoting one above others. The best model might emerge in one range of variables, but be inappropriate in another. Best does not necessarily mean closest fit to experimental results, either. Sometimes intelligibly and tractability are significant factors in retaining and using a model.

[100] H. P. Owen, 'Review of 'Christian Discourse'', *Philosophy* 41, 158 (1966), 370-371, 371.

In terms of Ramsey's doctrine of the atonement, or any other doctrine, the choice of models does not have to be made. We can, surely, live with multiple models, as described (non-exhaustively) by Ramsey. The models interact and correct each other, leading the theologian to a dynamic understanding of the doctrine. The choice of a single best model may well cut down the options for understanding in future.

The choice of a best model bears some resemblance to Lonergan's functional specialty of Dialectic. Here, however, as noted, we do not have to make a choice. We can undertake the theological task with a plethora of models, choosing the most appropriate one (while recognising its limitations) for the task in hand.

Ramsey's treatment of atonement is helpful, stimulating and useful. He perhaps errs in two ways. Firstly, he underestimates the use and power of stories, moving, perhaps too quickly, to an apparently less dynamic and open model view of doctrine. Further, he seems to ignore that even his discussion of the doctrine in its Scriptural and patristic manifestations is, itself, a narrative. Theology and its models are part of, and use, narrative.

Secondly, Ramsey does not need to choose a single overarching doctrine as the best model. Science shows that there may not be a best model, and that we can still develop a subject without having to choose. Further, his criterion for choice of model, that of empirical fit, is rather vague and a choice on this basis could easily be challenged. It is in fact, it seems to me, better not to make a choice and live with a multiplicity of available models.

6.4 Comparison

The key differences between Lonergan's and Ramsey's approaches to the doctrine of redemption lie in their differences in how models work and in how doctrine and language work. Lonergan views the original statement of doctrine as a truth expressed in the context of its time. The work of a theologian is to recover that meaning and re-express it in the current context. Ramsey regards the original statements of doctrine as being statements of 'cosmic disclosure' which cannot express the whole of that disclosure. We therefore have to catch on to what the author meant.

Both Ramsey and Lonergan regard the development of doctrine as being a historical process. Doctrines can be re-expressed and distorted by each successive generation of theologians, and it is hence necessary to return to the originals and interpret them afresh. From this Ramsey draws a variety of models and selects one as being the most appropriate overarching view. This does not mean he discards the others. Each model has a role within the manifold of

models in correcting discussion of the others. His main concern is that no single model should be pushed too far, to the point of heresy, or at least pointless and unhelpful questions.

Lonergan does not view models as highly as Ramsey does (Section 2.4.1) and therefore moves more quickly to propositions. He thus does not seem to be able to find how the different aspects of the doctrine he describes can interact, nor how one might choose an overall view, convinced as he is that such a view must exist. Ramsey notes that there is no single track to mystery. Different models will yield different disclosures to different people.[101] Diversity is legitimate.[102] Lonergan is, perhaps, forced to play the 'mystery card' sooner.[103] In this sense, mystery means 'the secret counsels of God'. He concedes that, in the New Testament, this mystery is presented in a variety of ways, realised in the death and resurrection of Jesus. The redemption is intelligible but is not synthesised into one account.

Both Ramsey and Lonergan use most of Lonergan's functional specialties. They both assemble data – a plethora of Bible verses and later theologians. They both interpret this data in its original context and how understanding has been developed. They both examine, in part, the history of the doctrines which they are interested in. There is then the question of how the various aspects of the doctrine (models, for Ramsey) fit together. Consideration of this is Dialectics.

Foundations is the thematization and explicit objectification of conversion – intellectual, moral and religious. It defines the horizon within which the meaning of doctrines can be apprehended.[104] Here, perhaps, we see the major difference between Ramsey and Lonergan emerging. Their horizons are defined by different ecclesiology and tradition. That is not to say that either is insufficiently or inadequately a Christian, or a Christian thinker, but that their outlooks differ rather. Lonergan was a Jesuit, Ramsey an Anglican, and this led to differences in education and context, even though both were Christians during roughly the same period of the Twentieth Century. In Lonergan's terms, the thematization of their conversions led to them having rather different horizons. In terms of theology and particularly theological method, the context of their work was somewhat different. In our hybrid theological method, this means that the backgrounds of their works were not the same. Hence, part at least of Foundations is prior to the theological enterprise (Section 7.3.4).

The functional specialties of Doctrines and Systematics stand within the horizons of the individual theologians. Thus, while both Lonergan and Ramsey broadly outline similar

[101] Ramsey, *Models and Mystery*, 65.
[102] R. Strange, 'Faith and Theology in the University', *New Blackfriars* 53, 626 (1972), 307-313, 313.
[103] Lonergan, 'The Redemption', 24.
[104] Lonergan, *Method*, 126.

doctrines of the atonement, they emphasise different aspects. Ramsey outlines various models which interact, and seeks to find an overarching model which incorporates most of the insights obtained from the models. Lonergan too seeks an overarching understanding, but his aim is something more propositional, and he resorts to the claim that the biblical data hints at a divine plan of salvation.

In a sense both authors arrive at a similar point. Further work might indicate that Ramsey's model of love and Lonergan's law of the Cross are at least compatible. Both are, after all, firmly rooted in Scripture and tradition. The functional specialty of Systematics exists to work out systems of concepts and address inconsistencies. It is possible that Ramsey would see the inconsistencies as something we have to live with, and so his models interact and correct each other, while Lonergan would seek a higher synthesis to remove inconsistencies he sees as merely apparent.[105]

The authors' orders of using their steps in theological method are summarised in Table 6.1, Table 6.2 and Table 6.3. For Lonergan's 1958 lecture and Thesis 17, we have attempted to show the sequence of steps in both the DiM method and in *Method in Theology*. We can see that neither discussions of the atonement follow Lonergan's methods and that some functional specialties are repeated within the discussion. This suggests that Lonergan's methods are not exhaustive or prescriptive menus for undertaking theology.

DiM	**Method In Theology**
	Communication
Understand	History
	Interpretation
	Interpretation & Systematics
Understand systematically	Systematics
Reverse counter-positions, develop positions, understand systematically	Interpretation & History
	History
	Research, Interpretation, Doctrine, Systematics, Dialectics
	Systematics
Reverse counter-positions & develop positions	Dialectics
	Systematics

Table 6.1: Lonergan's 1958 Redemption Lecture

[105] Lonergan, *Method*, 127.

DiM	Method In Theology
Understand systematically	Systematics
	Research, Interpretation
Understand systematically	Systematics, Doctrine
	Research, Doctrines, *Question*

Table 6.2: Lonergan's Thesis 17

In our analysis of Thesis 17 (Table 6.2) we note that Lonergan does pose the theological question, at the end of the discussion. This is at the end of his sequence, and does not fall within his functional specialties. The fact that the question does intrude suggests that it is an important part of the theological method, but that Lonergan perhaps views it as an obvious prerequisite to undertaking theology. The fact that it arises at the end of the discussion suggests that there is another theological discussion to be had.

Ramsey's progress through his discussion of the atonement is mapped to the steps of his implicit method in Table 6.3. Ramsey did not follow a particular sequence in his theology, and we can see that in fact he repeats steps. Towards the end of his discussion he almost returns to the start of the process and repeats the steps as he discusses his favoured interpretative scheme, that found in Hebrews. Ramsey is prepared to iterate his theological method, to repeat the steps to obtain a different, perhaps improved, understanding.

Ramsey
Question, Contemporary problem
Evidence
Historical formulation
Examples & Historical formulations
Re-interpretation
Evidence
Historical formulations
Contemporary examples
Re-interpretation
Underlying disclosure

Table 6.3: Ramsey's Atonement

Overall, we see that Ramsey sticks fairly closely to his implicit method, or habitual way of doing theology. Lonergan, on the other hand, does not seem, at least all the time, to use any of the methods he developed. Perhaps we should not expect too much because his method was still under development during his teaching on the atonement that we have examined and anyway he regarded method as a guide when stuck. We can also see that the elements of theological method which Lonergan identified, the functional specialties, are present in both sets of

writing, although not necessarily in the same order, or with the same weight, which Lonergan assigns them in his later method.

6.5 Conclusion

We have outlined the views on the atonement given by Lonergan and Ramsey, and assessed the theological methods which their writings entail. We have found that Ramsey follows his usual approach to tackling theological problems. Lonergan does not always pursue his own methods. We should, perhaps, not judge Lonergan harshly on this. Firstly, his writings on the atonement were created while he was working out his theological methods. Secondly, Lonergan viewed a method as something not vital to the theological effort, but as something worth keeping in mind when undertaking a job.[106]

The differences in the content of the doctrines of atonement that Lonergan and Ramsey describe can be related to differences in viewpoint. Ramsey, as we have seen (Section 2.3.2) sets more store by the nature of models (and metaphors) than Lonergan, and is therefore happier to discuss models as the closest we can get to an undefinable reality. In this sense his view of theology is a little like Polkinghorne's: we can grasp an underlying reality better, but never grasp the reality itself.[107] Lonergan has a different view, in that a doctrine is something which is ultimately intelligible and which, given enough data and understanding, we should be able to grasp. That we cannot is because of our limitation in transferring from the original context in which a truth was given to the current context(s) in which we live and must preach the gospel. For Lonergan a truth exists which is graspable. For Ramsey a truth exists but we can never reach it.

Both Lonergan and Ramsey seem to abandon the idea that the story of atonement could be powerful in itself.[108] Both move, probably too quickly, to models and propositions respectively. This is probably an oversight on their parts, and may well be suggested by the dominance of science and logical positivism of the time in which they wrote. The concept of hermeneutics was only just beginning to obtain intellectual purchase. While it is certainly argued that Lonergan's thought, at least, is broadly compatible with modern hermeneutic theology, and Lonergan himself does refer to Gadamer, the implications for theology as a whole are unlikely to have been particularly clear.[109]

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[106] Lonergan, *Method*, 4.
[107] Polkinghorne, *Belief in God in an Age of Science*, 30.
[108] But see Ramsey, 'Facts and Disclosures', 176. Ramsey there sees Christian stories as disclosing an objective reference as well as features of the world.
[109] See D. Teevan, *Lonergan, Hermeneutics, and Method*, (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2005).

The power of the story of the atonement is not in the detailed discussion of how it happens or happened. The true power is in the sweep of the Biblical narrative and in the narrative of the church from the earliest times to now. Both Ramsey and Lonergan are close to admitting this but turn away to more static ideas of dogma and models. It seems to me that models are more dynamic than propositions, but a model is still potentially something that that be reduced to its constituent parts and analysed. Human imagination, in fact, plays a major part in using models in the sciences, despite what some scientists might argue. It would be very hard to believe that imagination plays little or no role in theology.

Neither Lonergan nor Ramsey follows a linear method of theology. Functional specialties are repeated, ignored, and undertaken out of sequence. The functional specialties do give us an idea of what operations are to be done within them. Thus, when Ramsey is discussing a historical formulation, he is pursuing operations within History. Our analysis of the process through which both authors undertake theology leads us to consider a more general method of theology than Lonergan has suggested. Taking the sequences of the discussions of atonement into account, we can develop a 'hybrid' method in theology, which is the focus of the next chapter.

7 A Hybrid Method

7.1 Introduction

We have found that Ramsey's implicit method, and Lonergan's functional specialties and resultant method have overlaps, but we have not yet attempted to merge them. We have identified narrative as a possible means of controlling a theological project, and we have also noted that both Lonergan and Ramsey rather underplay the importance of narrative as an operation in theology. We therefore need to separate narrative as an operation that is, narrative theology, from narrative as a part of method (Section 7.2). Then we examine the possibility of creating a model of theological method incorporating both Lonergan's method and Ramsey implicit approach.

We have accepted that Lonergan's functional specialties are reasonable parts of any theological undertaking, but have questioned the location and role of Foundations in the method, suggesting that it underpins the whole theological enterprise. We have also noted that Lonergan takes no account of the posing of the theological question to be addressed. Further, Lonergan takes little account of the interlinking between functional specialties where the links may not be in the order of his method. We can look at the order of functional specialties in his method and choose the next one, but we cannot explain why that one is next, except that it fits with his model for cognitive process. As we have noted, this is a rather weak criterion for deciding on the course of a project. Lonergan concedes that there is 'affinity' between History and Doctrines, and Dialectic and Foundations, but does not explain why these are to be done in the order of his method.[1] In short, Lonergan's method is more dictated by the levels of his cognitive process than it is by the reality of doing theology.

Lonergan sees his method as a guide rather than a rule book. However, it can be criticised for appearing inflexible. Ramsey's approach is to deploy a number of stages in undertaking theological reflection, but not to have these in any particular order. Of course, some stages, such as posing the problem, have to come before others, but Ramsey can move from one stage to another as he sees fit. Lonergan's method as written, if not in intent, does not seem to permit this.

Further, while we have questioned the ordering of the functional specialties in Lonergan's theological method, we admit that there is the need for some rationale for moving from one to the next. Ramsey's implicit method does not imply that all elements are undertaken at

[1] Lonergan, *Method*, 136-7.

once. There should be an unfolding rationale to the activities undertaken, and these are best summarised as a form of narrative. This is discussed further in Section 7.4. First, however, we need to distinguish between narrative theology and narrative as a controlling paradigm for theological method.

7.2 Method and Narrative

Each theologian, as we have seen with both Ramsey and Lonergan, has their own way of doing theology. Each episode of theology in a theologian's output is a story, a narrative of how the theology has been done. This is also true of science. A scientific paper tells a story, at least in Aristotle's terms.[2] There is a beginning, an end, and something happens in between. A scientific paper may have a highly stylised plot, but it is a plot. Further, the story told in the paper is not an exact reporting of the events. There is a considerable quantity of 'cleaning up' of the process of obtaining the results. Blind alleys followed are omitted, failed experiments are not reported, but the outcome is a narrative of sorts.

It may seem odd to refer to scientific reports as narratives, but such articles, as well as experiments, are forms thereof. For example, a simple experiment would have a billiard ball entering a flat table from the left at a given speed and in a certain direction. It hits another ball, and leaves the experiment in a different direction with a different speed. There is a beginning, middle and end to this process, as there is to reporting it. This is a narrative, although it is not generally recognised as such.

Both Lonergan and Ramsey sometimes discuss science in terms of narratives. For example, Ramsey discusses the development of views of scientific models, from 'picturing models' to 'analogue models'.[3] Lonergan describes Galileo's discovery of the correlation between time and distance in falling bodies.[4] In discussion and teaching of science, narrative is frequently encountered.

If narrative is rife in science, where even a mathematical model can deliver a story, it is likely that narrative is as important in theology. We can go further: scientific questions cannot be asked until there is a certain development in the subject. For example, x-rays were not discovered until after photography was developed. By analogy, it would seem that theological questions cannot be answered until the subject has developed in a certain way – the Patristic discussions of Trinity and Christology are examples. Concepts in both science and theology develop in history, usually from the less to the more complex. This is why often, although not

[2] Aristotle, 'Poetics', in *The Complete Works of Aristotle, the Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. J. Barnes (Princeton: University Press, 1984), 2316-2340, 1455b, 24-9.
[3] Ramsey, *Models and Mystery*, 2-9.
[4] Lonergan, *Insight*, 58.

always, the way of teaching is the way of discovery, although older results in science are usually represented in terms of newer, more concise, mathematics.

A story teller owns their narrative. A scientist owns their results, reported in a paper. Christian discourse is self-involving. Further, the narrative locates the speaker; narratives are made.[5] As our case study shows, Ramsey and Lonergan can write on similar subjects and arrive at similar results, but the processes are different; this is partly due to their contexts.

The point here is that firstly, narrative is found in most places in our lives and discounting its value risks distortion. Secondly, narrative is a vehicle for delivering truths, be that scientific results or theological outcomes. The results of an experiment have to fit with everything else we might know. If it does not, suspicion falls upon the experiment and its execution, and subsequently on the science as understood. Occasionally, this might cause a scientific paradigm shift.

The consequence of this is that narrative as a quality of doing and reporting findings needs to be more widely acknowledged and that those findings also form part of the history of the subject, itself a narrative, which controls the possibility of obtaining the results in the first place. A method is a form of narrative; we are told to do this and then do that. Narrative in science and in theology needs an acknowledged position.

We distinguish two roles for narrative within theological discourse. The first is narrative theology as an operation within a functional specialty of doing theology. The second is the role of narrative in structuring a theological project and the output from such a process. We discuss the first briefly here; a full exposition is beyond the scope of this work. The role of narrative in structuring theological method is considered in more detail in Section 7.4.

7.2.1 Narrative Theology

We have suggested that both Lonergan and Ramsey move too quickly away from narrative, and that the theology of both could be strengthened by more attention to both the overall story of Scripture and the narrative structure of many parts of the Bible. Such a sweep starts with stories in the Bible, the history of Israel, the teaching, life, death and resurrection of Jesus and the history of Christians, the churches and theology thereafter.

Narrative theology is relatively new, although de Nys notes that Hegel argues that narrative incorporates images and symbols and gives them their meaning. Religious discourse is not only

[5] N. Lash, 'Ideology, Metaphor and Analogy', in *Why Narrative?: Readings in Narrative Theology*, ed. S. Hauerwas and L. G. Jones (Eugene: OR: Wipf and Stock, 1997), 113-37, 120.

image, symbol and narrative, but involves concepts about which we can think.[6] Theology needs to recall narrative as well as declare its faith through propositions. Ramsey and Lonergan in moving swiftly to models and propositions are probably influenced by the empirical philosophy of their time, by logical positivism, and also by the claims of science. The physical science of their day would probably not have acknowledged its roots in narrative.

Both Ramsey and Lonergan err somewhat in supposing that, say, a doctrine or a metaphor can be isolated and studied. Such reductionism does not work in the natural sciences (although it does not stop us from trying) and, ultimately, while it might be useful, will have limited success in theology. It is a rare experiment that can have all its variables isolated. It would seem to be a rarer doctrine that can be similarly studied. In the following sections we shall briefly examine how narrative might strengthen Lonergan's and Ramsey's theological cases.

7.2.1.1 Ramsey

By analogy with how science is done, we suggest that Ramsey can incorporate narrative into his theology. In science, a situation (an observation or experiment, for example) gives rise to some theoretical work, a model. In order to establish the usefulness of the model, the numbers are 'plugged in'. The result is compared with the observation to establish the veracity of the model. This is empirical verification.

Ramsey already has the under-developed concept of empirical fit for his theological models. We have seen that he attempts to join models together in order to prevent one becoming the overarching voice, which leads to distortion. By analogy with scientific method, we can see how he might use narrative, that is the narrative of the Bible, to plug his theological models back in to see how they work. No scientific model describes every phenomenon; no theological model is going to be totally adequate to the task.

Exactly how empirical verification through empirical fit is achieved is unclear in Ramsey's writings. There will remain significant areas of subjectivity and doubt about which models apply to which areas of theology and Scripture. Even scientific models have areas to which they cannot be applied. Ramsey's empirical fit is analogous to verification, but is not the same, and cannot give the sorts of answers that scientists aspire to.

Ramsey's theology, while it does depart from narrative, does retain fairly clear links back to Scripture and the cosmic disclosures which in Ramsey's understanding form its basis. While his means of return from the models and metaphors to the text, empirical fit, is underdeveloped,

[6] M. De Nys, 'Philosophy of Religion', in *G.M.F. Hegel: Key Concepts*, ed. M. Baur (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), 116-127, 118-9.

it does provide for a process of verification from the data we possess. This is fraught with subjectivity and the difficulties Ramsey has identified with language describing cosmic disclosures, but it does provide a satisfactory means of preventing theology flying off on its own.

7.2.1.2 Lonergan

In his theology, Lonergan does not give much in terms of narrative of the original Bible stories and contexts. He uses Bible verses to prove the statements he wishes to use to construct his theory. It is hard to establish whether narrative is used in Lonergan's theological works. For example, Lonergan seems to view the Parables of Jesus as a means of obtaining an insight into the kingdom of God. The story promotes a higher viewpoint, and Lonergan does not seem to value it as a story.[7]

What is missing in Lonergan's account is a means of checking back with the original Gospel passage that the higher viewpoint is not, in Ramsey's phrase 'theological plate spinning'. Even if we accept that abstraction sublates the lower viewpoint, that the abstraction still contains the data, we have to find a way of making the abstract concrete again. As with Ramsey, this is the analogy of 'plugging in' the numbers in science. After all, Archimedes' insight would have been of no use if he had not answered the king's question about the crown. Lonergan does not always seem to acknowledge that there is a second 'pivot' in science, from the abstract back to the concrete. In Archimedes' case the king and his crown become fairly irrelevant for Lonergan once the abstract formulation of displacement and specific gravity are found.[8]

Lonergan's means of achieving theological verification seems to be though accepted Roman Catholic doctrine. Dissenting voices to that doctrine seem to be quickly dispatched. For example Barth and Bultmann are both described as requiring intellectual conversion.[9] Lonergan does not so much argue against their views as assert the traditional teaching of the Roman Catholic Church.

Perhaps a way of assessing Lonergan's theology is to examine the theses he used for teaching (for example, Thesis 17 of *De Verbo Incarnate* (Section 6.2.3)) and asking how it enables us to tell the story. Lonergan seems to think that this 'law of the cross' is the overarching view of the atonement. In response, we can suggest that it is one view, but does not do entire justice to the whole of the biblical discussion of the atonement nor to the other concepts that Lonergan discusses in this context.

[7] Lonergan, *Insight*, 569.
[8] Lonergan, *Insight*, 30.
[9] Lonergan, *Method*, 296.

Overall, Lonergan's early abstraction from the narratives of the Bible seems to damage his ability to return from his highest viewpoint to the concrete stories and contexts. Doubtless the doctrinal structures within which he worked and taught provide a means of tracking back from these abstract viewpoints to the texts of the faith, but this is not so obvious to an outsider. A stronger emphasis on narrative should yield a theology with closer links to Scriptural and historical dynamics.

7.2.2 Conclusion

It is perhaps unfair, or at least rather anachronistic, to expect Ramsey and Lonergan to have presented fully blown theologies incorporating the insights of narrative theology. However, we have indicated briefly that the inclusion of narrative insights would strengthen their theologies. Narrative theology, however, is not the main focus of our attention here. In terms of theological method, we can regard it as operations within the functional specialties of Interpretation and History. Our main interest is to discuss the use of narrative in providing a controlling paradigm for theological method, and it is to that hybrid method we now turn.

7.3 The Hybrid Method

The hybrid theological method is presented in this section. The aim is to provide a method that incorporates the understanding we have developed from both Ramsey's implicit and Lonergan's explicit methods and the example of doing theology presented in the case study. The resultant method is a generalisation of Lonergan's *Method in Theology* process and incorporates the iterative and non-linear aspects of Ramsey's approach we noted above. We also include the beginning and end of the theological process; Lonergan seems to have neglected the first of these while Ramsey does not discuss the last, although he does, of course, engage in creating outcome communications.

7.3.1 Initiation

Any analysis of a theological problem has to start with an acknowledgement of that problem. Further, this should usually include the issues of how the problem has arisen. Lonergan's lecture on the atonement does not do this, although given the setting the reason was probably pedagogical. However, we may question as to why atonement poses a theological problem.

The posing of a problem arises from the context of the theologian. Ramsey acknowledges that words change in meaning and that a doctrine which might have been perfectly understandable in, say, the 13th century may be regarded as garbled today. Both Lonergan and Ramsey accept that theology has to go backwards to recover original meanings, although they disagree as to how complete that meaning might be.

The posing of the problem is contextual, that is, the questions which can arise depend on the context of the questioner. For example, questions about the nature of Christ precede those about the Trinity. Only when the former is at least partially settled does the latter question come to the fore. This is, in part, Lonergan's functional specialty of Foundations. Questions arise from the context of the questioner, their current state of understanding, the resources available to them, their traditions and so on. This is the 'horizon' of the questioner. Hence we have suggested that Lonergan's Foundations is misplaced.

Language forms a significant part of the context of a theological problem. The possibilities of a solution are set by the context, concepts and language available to the theologian. Thus we can suggest that Anselm's 'feudal' model of the atonement was a model available and clear at the time of his proposing it. This may not be true today, as the context has changed; concepts and language may have shifted. The process of theological reflection requires a certain amount of language related detective work. Consideration has to be given to the level of meaning at which a statement is made. Further, the models and metaphors used to navigate the boundaries of sub-languages, as well as moving from one level of meaning to another, have to be considered. The hybrid language model (Figure 4.1) can inform this work.

We create, by considering a theological method, a specific sub-language. As our hybrid language model suggests (Section 4.4) this means care has to be taken, at each level of meaning, in negotiating the boundaries between theological method and other sub-languages, including theology itself. Lonergan's division of theological method into functional specialties creates an expectation of the parts of doing theology. Our own division of Ramsey's theological stages also creates a grammar of undertaking theology. We have shown that these are compatible, at least to some extent. We can suggest that there is an underpinning coherence to theological method and its functional specialties. Lonergan's grammar includes an ordering of functional specialties which we do not find to be generally valid. Exactly how the functional specialties are ordered in a specific project is discussed next.

7.3.2 Process

Within our hybrid method, once the process has begun, there is no particular direction to be taken. The functional specialties may, in some sense, be undertaken in any order. Even Communications can occur during the process, if Communications includes discussing partial results at conferences or over coffee. Often the ordering of functional specialties may follow Lonergan's sequence, but this is not necessary. It is necessary for the ordering to have some rationale. A theologian should not be undertaking the work of a given functional specialty just because a method says they should. There should be a reason within theological reflection for

the ordering of its elements. For example, in his discussion of the atonement Ramsey discusses the historical development of the doctrine after presenting the New Testament evidence. This seems to be a natural flow, not a move from Interpretation to History.

The ordering of functional specialties, then, is directed by the theological problem under consideration. While a functional specialty might be undertaken, for example, evidence is gathered, translated, interpreted, this is always done within the context of the problem and the researcher. It may be, for example, that a comprehensive discussion of the history of a doctrine has already been published. The theologian could, using this, acquire the evidence and history required to move straight to a discussion of the various ideas represented by the doctrine (Dialectics) or to a discussion of the doctrine itself in a contemporary context. Of course, this might lead the theologian back to reconsider some of the historical views; the point is that this order here is set by the problem and resources available.

The theological process can also be iterative. We might, for example, consider the early church's ideas of the atonement in terms of stories, and then examine patristic attitudes. This might persuade us that we had under-emphasised some aspects of the New Testament literature on the subject. Similarly, examination of a given doctrine might entail that we have to repeatedly examine the historical contexts in which it has been expounded. Theological method is iterative both within functional specialties and between them. There is no simple 'waterfall model' of doing theology as Lonergan proposes. In software engineering, many other models for projects have been developed, primarily because the waterfall model either does not capture the process, or because it is too inflexible and unresponsive to changing environments.[10] A theological method along Lonergan's lines would seem to suffer from the same defects.

As with other subjects, the messiness of obtaining results might be ignored and sanitised for publication, but human activity tends to go over and over the different operations of research. Lonergan has, perhaps, been misled both by reliance on his cognitive process to provide a basis for his method, and by his analogy with scientific method. His basis for method in cognitive process is discussed above (Section 5.2.2). Science is not quite as methodical as Lonergan seems to believe.[11] While there is a hypothesis – experiment – theory cycle, a science project need not start at any particular point in it, and can switch between parts of the cycle, or pursue theory and experiment in parallel. As with our hybrid theological method, scientific method is highly iterative in operation. Lonergan's metaphor of a wheel turning but also

[10] I. Sommerville, *Software Engineering*, (Harlow: Addison-Wesley, 2001), 46.
[11] See P. Feyerabend, *Against Method*, (London: Verso, 2010), 1-5. I doubt if either science or theology would benefit from a thoroughly anarchic method, however.

moving on is apt, but possibly it turns more quickly than he thought, and it can start from any point within the cycle.

7.3.3 Outcome

The concluding functional specialty of any theological inquiry (as with any other form of research) is (or should be) Communications. It is questionable as to whether unpublished research was worth undertaking in the first place. If the results are felt to be too trivial to publish, for example, then the fault may lie in the problem setting in the first place. Publication, in its broadest sense, therefore, is understood to be the close of a given theological project.

This closure does not necessarily mean that all the options for pursuing further work have been closed. Usually this is not the case. However, it does mark the end of a stage of theological reflection, where a result of some description has been obtained. Further work may well ensue, in which case the theological problem can be re-posed, perhaps in a refined or more specific sense. The method, therefore, repeats itself as a whole, as well as being iterative within the process.

An outcome from a theological project, therefore, merges into the original context. For example, the presentation of a conference paper may yield questions which the presenter has not considered. These questions may lead to further work, another process of theological reflection, but the horizon of the presenter has changed and the context of the original question is different. The questions for further work may be more or less explicit in the new context, but the context of the researcher is always evolving.

7.3.4 The Hybrid Method

Figure 7.1 shows a schematic of the hybrid theological method developed here. The theological method is active against a background context, indicated by the large square, which includes the language, tradition and immediate circumstances of the posing of the theological question. The question is posed in the leftmost oval, and the process is started. The control of the process, that is the reasons for moving from one functional specialty to the next, is by some overlaying paradigm. We suggest that this can be narrative, but it is not essential. The controlling paradigm oversees the flow of functional specialties; each is accessed, along with its operations and own context to move the project along (see Section 7.4). Once completed, the results are returned to the controlling paradigm, which then accesses the next functional specialty required for moving the project along. The last functional specialty in the chain is usually Communications, which yields some sort of outcome, represented by the rightmost oval. An outcome is a concrete communication, such as a talk, book, article or

monograph, or a combination of these. Outcomes can be, and often are, the starting point for creating further questions and hence repeating the cycle. Usually this is in association with the background context supplying more issues to be addressed beyond the specific outcome.

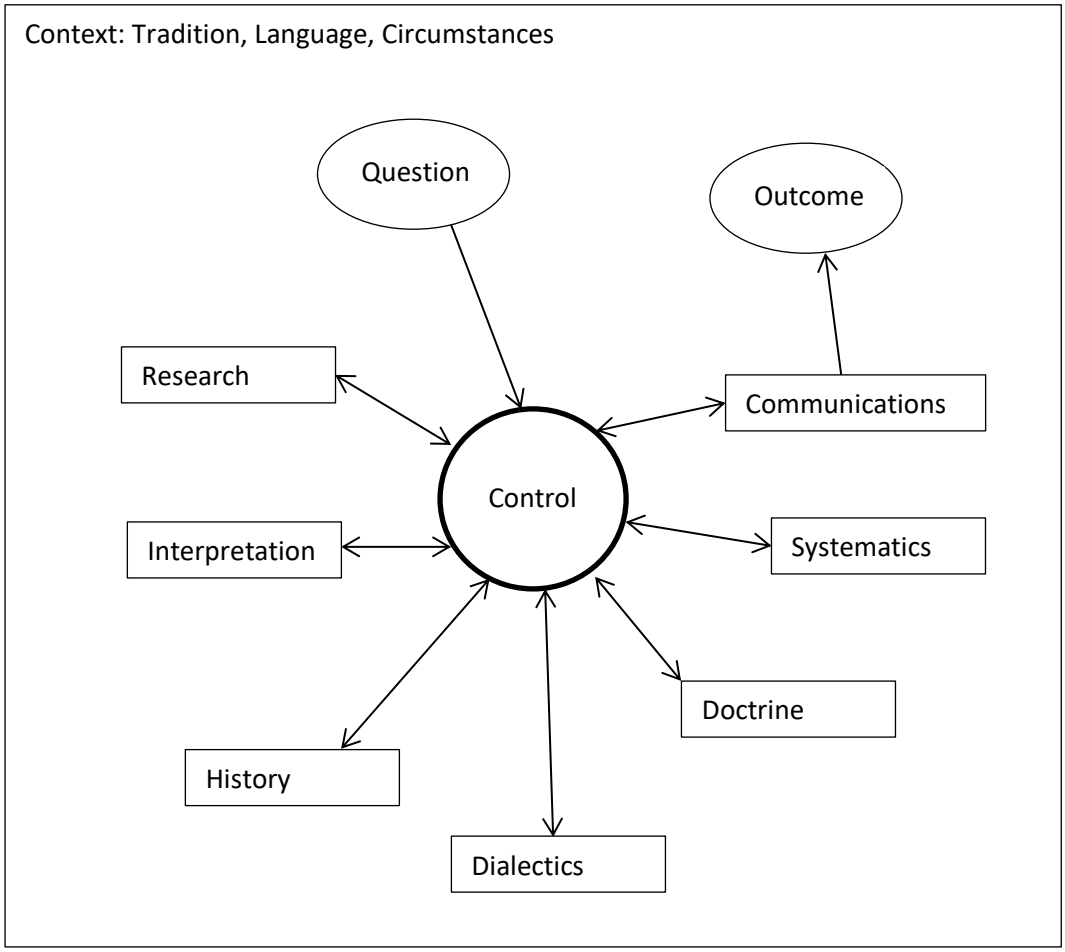

Figure 7.1: The Hybrid Theological Method

Within the hybrid theological method there is the option of following Lonergan's waterfall method, although we have removed Foundations as a specialty and placed it in the surrounding context. The hybrid method is a generalisation of Lonergan's, rather than a replacement thereof. It is flexible enough to show that Ramsey's implied method fits within an overall methodical scheme. Thus Ramsey moves from the Question to Research and Interpretation, History, Doctrines and Dialectic, Systematics. He repeats some of these steps in his discussion of atonement, for example repeating Research, Interpretation and History in his discussion of the theology of Hebrews. He does eventually move to Communications and Outcome. His progress through the method is non-linear and the hybrid method can capture this in a way that Lonergan's description of method cannot. Lonergan's own theological

undertakings regarding atonement also fit within this method, although not into his 'waterfall' model.

The operations within a functional specialty are also controlled by the underlying context of the inquiry and inquirer. For example, what constitutes History is dependent on the understanding of history at a given time. Thus an 'Europeanist' view yields a different sort of historical understanding from an 'Orientalist' view.[12] How the theologian negotiates this depends on their own context and training, as well as the requirements of the project and process. The functional specialties therefore evolve both with the underlying philosophy and state of understanding at the time of the inquiry and that of the contemporary theologian.

The hybrid method, as with descriptions of scientific method, conceals as much as it reveals. The method itself is dynamic, and each of the functional specialties evolves. The context itself, which involves the culture in which the theologian is embedded and their own specific circumstances, also evolves. A theologian can therefore answer the same question a different way today to the answer they provided twenty years ago. This should not surprise us. The same is true in science as knowledge and techniques advance.

The hybrid method is a partial description of how theology might be undertaken. It is not, and cannot be, prescriptive, but it provides a more dynamic model of theological reflection than Lonergan's method in theology. Each step in the process is determined by the central 'control' paradigm. We have suggested that this can be narrative, and this must now be explored.

7.4 The Control of Method: Narrative

A theological method may give us a grammar for discussing how theology is undertaken, but a grammar does not yield the things for which language is used, in this case the content of theology. We have seen that a criticism of Lonergan's method is that method is interdependent with content, while Lonergan seems to think otherwise (Section 5.2.2). There are therefore two issues: how can this interdependence of method and content be expressed, and how can a grammar of theological method be constructed into theological output?

Lodge observes that narrative structure is like the girders of a high rise building in that you cannot see but which determines the shape and structure of the building.[13] A report on theological reflection can, by analogy, be described as structured by theological method. For example, Ramsey's discussion of the atonement can be seen as a narrative of his undertaking a theological problem. The narrative structure of his implied method gives a unity to the

[12] See, for an example G. Ágoston, 'Firearms and Military Adaptation: The Ottomans and the European Military Revolution, 1450-1800', *Journal of World History* (2014), 85-124.
[13] D. Lodge, *The Art of Fiction*, (London: Penguin, 1992), 216.

theological undertaking that might otherwise be lacking. Lonergan's method attempts to provide such a structure but the justification for moving from one functional specialty to another is weak, and the overall structure does not reproduce theological method as Ramsey undertakes it. Lonergan's theology does have narrative elements in it; this seems to indicate that his structural theological method is flawed. Situating the functional specialties within a narrative of problem solving exposes the unity of the process and indicates the logic of proceeding from, say, Doctrines to History.

The use of narrative as an organising device in theological method prevents the functional specialties being seen as a 'grab bag' of sets of operations to be performed. Many narratives provide a logic for moving from one scene to the next. So it can be with a theological project. The reasons for moving from one functional specialty to the next should be clear, at least in retrospect. This is not to say that narrative should necessarily control the ordering of functional specialties, but that we need to be able to describe in some way the movement from one element to the next. The same is also true within functional specialties, of course. While we can write narrative histories, often thematic accounts are produced. The reason for choosing one procedure or the other needs to be given. This is true both within and between functional specialties.

A theological project is located within the life of the theologian.[14] As we have seen, the posing of a theological question arises within the context of the theologian, including their past work, tradition and interests. This relates to part of Lonergan's functional specialty of Foundations. Foundations considers the 'horizon' of an author. This is, broadly speaking, the result of Lonergan's first phase of theological method where the theologian, having decided in Dialectics which position is correct, then considers the location and state of conversion of the author. Lonergan rather neglects the issue that the theologian's own horizon needs consideration here too. The sweep of the theologian's own life in arriving at the question and the progress made and process used to attempt an answer are important, as well as the narratives of the lives of the authors studied. As well as being partly located in the context underlying project initiation, aspects of Foundations are to be found wherever narrative is used in theological method.

The interdependence of theological method and theology itself is analogous to that of narrative structure and narrative. We may not notice the theological method, but it forms the structure of our reflections. There is reciprocity between theology and its method; the one

[14] See for example J. W. McClendon, Jr., *Biography as Theology: How Life Stories Can Remake Today's Theology*, (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2002).

informs the other. This is also true of the content of scientific investigation and its method. By reflecting on a successful outcome, method may be made explicit. By using the method, understanding of the content may be advanced.

A method can be viewed as taking the elements of investigation and, under a controlling paradigm (which for theology we have suggested can be narrative) moulding the content into an acceptable outcome. The elements of the original grammar of method may be more or less exposed and the dynamic and iterative nature of inquiry may obscure them, but the method is present.

7.5 Critique

A criticism of the method of correlation is that while it is interested in human experience, it defines it too broadly, and implies that all human experience is the same. A political theology by contrast defines human experience more specifically and places the individual in their socio-historical context.[15] Thus liberation theology locates itself in the context of the poor and feminist theology in the context of women. In some circumstances this criticism is valid, but we have attempted to answer it in the hybrid method by placing the method in the context of the theologian. This draws attention to the possibly pre-theological assumptions made by the theologian, perhaps even before posing the theological question. At least, the hybrid method may encourage theologians to situate themselves before starting.

The hybrid method may also be open to the accusation that it has too few or, perhaps, too many, functional specialties and that it has simply taken them over from Lonergan's work. This latter point is correct, although we have acknowledged that the functional specialties do evolve with the context. As the method is iterative, not every functional specialty need be addressed. The functional specialties provide a grammar for discussing theological method, not an exhaustive list of operations which have to be carried out for a project to qualify as theology.

We have taken our list of functional specialties from Lonergan's work. The broad definitions of them do seem to be valid. That does not mean that the operations within the functional specialties are fixed. As we have noted, they do evolve as the research process in both theology and other subjects evolves. Other functional specialties, if they do arise, can be added to the method without disrupting the overall model. As the process is an iterative one with no fixed sequence of functional specialties, an addition will not affect the overall concept.

[15] Veeneman, *Theological Method*, 60.

The hybrid model may be thought to underrate the effect of language on theology. Language has been emphasised in this thesis, particularly in Chapter 4, but here seems to have been relegated to the background context. This is partially true, but language underpins the functional specialties themselves, as most operations that fall into the specialties will depend on how language functions. We have also suggested that the hybrid model itself fits into the third level of meaning, interiority, as reflection on how theory, that is the doing of theology, occurs. We suggested in our hybrid language model that models and metaphors are one route of mediating between levels of meaning. A model of theological method, therefore, can mediate between interiority and theory. It provides, as we have suggested, a grammar for discussing how theology is being done. While language is not explicitly part of the hybrid method, its importance to that method cannot be underestimated.

It might be thought that language and its study, and the models and metaphors deployed for understanding, could be the topic of another functional specialty. However, the study of language already exists within the functional specialties, whether in examining and understanding a text (Interpretation) or in writing a treatise (Communication). Ramsey does advocate the explicit examination of language and its use in theology, but this is within several of his stages, which are the equivalent of Lonergan's functional specialties. Language is not studied here for its own sake and does not have specific outputs in the way that History or Doctrines does. It does, of course, contribute to these functional specialties. Ramsey's analysis of language is thus distributed over the whole of the hybrid theological method, as is Lonergan's understanding of levels of meaning.

We have suggested that narrative can be used as the control paradigm, but have not suggested any other paradigms. For example, Lindbeck suggests that there is a 'cognitive-propositionalist' approach to theology, where religious claims are similar to scientific claims as traditionally understood. Doctrines are informative propositions or truth claims about objective realities.[16] This could be used as a controlling paradigm for method, in that the result of each functional specialty can be examined for its truth and accepted and rejected on that basis. This would probably lead to a much reduced set of theological statements, as truth is hard to establish in any subject except mathematics, and this controlling paradigm might, in fact turn out to be more akin to logical positivism than anything else. The use of narrative as controlling paradigm permits a richer theology to develop. Similarly, we could use strict logic to provide our paradigm. This would ensure a progression from one functional specialty to another only if it was entailed by the results of the first. In this case it is hard to see how any

[16] Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 8. Veeneman, *Theological Method*, 63.

progress could be achieved, as there is no logical necessity to undertake, say, Systematics once Doctrines has yielded a result. The apparent failure of these alternative controlling paradigms, the search for truth and the use of strict logic to move from one functional specialty to the next, suggests that using the narrative of the project to control the sequence of functional specialties is a strong contender for the controlling paradigm. While other paradigms may be available, narrative does seem to have the flexibility required for the hybrid method to work.

Overall, the hybrid model may answer some of the criticisms of the method of correlation in theology, and is flexible enough to be adapted to additional functional specialties as well as changing contexts. It does not claim to be prescriptive nor exhaustive. As we have seen, no account of scientific method is able to be either prescriptive or exhaustive, and it would be unreasonable to assume that theological method should be any different. As an account and model of how some theology is done, the hybrid method seems valid, so far as it can go.

7.6 Conclusion

The considerations of scientific method (Chapter 2), cognitive process (Chapter 3), language (Chapter 4) and theological method (Chapter 5) have been brought together in a 'hybrid' method for theology. We suggest that Lonergan's theological method is too rigid for practical use, and replace it, with modifications, by a more flexible and iterative process, which can encompass Ramsey's approach to undertaking a theological project. Some control of the method is required, however, and we have suggested that, in theology, this control may be provided by narrative. The use of narrative in this way is not prescribed by the hybrid method and other forms of controlling paradigm might, under some circumstances, be more useful.

The hybrid method attempts to capture some of the dynamism of human thought, as well of the context in which the thinking of a theologian is contained. This dynamism also affects the functional specialties. For example, Interpretation can change when a discovery (such as the Dead Sea Scrolls) is made, and History can change as viewpoints evolve. The overall context of the theologian is also determined by their tradition, where, for instance, this can affect the canon of Scripture used. The model of method here is not one of static contexts and functional specialties with well-defined operations, but of dynamic, evolving, activities and contexts.

8 Conclusion

8.1 Summary

The initial hypothesis of the thesis was that Ramsey's disclosure epistemology and Lonergan's cognitive process based around insights correlate. This was explored via both authors' commitment to taking science and scientific method seriously, and then by an actual comparison of their cognitive processes. The initial hypothesis was found to be well founded. Further, the two views of human cognition were be used to complement each other. In particular, Lonergan's views could help to answer some of the criticisms of Ramsey's work pertaining to subjectivity and objectivity in a disclosure.

The congruence of cognitive processes, however, does not mean that Ramsey and Lonergan agree on everything else. We have explored their views of language and meaning, and concluded that they are different. For Ramsey, language is all we have to describe a disclosure, but it can never be adequate. For Lonergan, language seems to be transparent, at least in its initial use. Statements need to be re-interpreted in new contexts, but the original sense is held to be true. As we have seen, this has implications for the two authors' views of doctrine. The views of language and meaning, however disparate, are not irreconcilable, and we have proposed a hybrid language model, incorporating Lonergan's levels of meaning and Ramsey's attention to models and metaphors to transfer between them. This hybrid model also incorporates Ramsey's discussions of sub-languages, placing part of each sub-language at each level, and provides a description of how language, particularly religious language, works.

Doctrinally, both writers are orthodox, but they have different approaches to doing theology. Lonergan's view is that there should be a method, at least as a guide when the theologian is unsure what to do. Ramsey's theological method is consistent but implicit. Based on his understanding of models in science, he holds that theology can, by exploring its own models and metaphors, get closer to the original disclosure, interpret it better in the current context, but not arrive at a final statement of truth.

Lonergan disagrees, and the disagreement stems from his ecclesiological context. The Roman Catholic Church guards a deposit of faith: "She guards the memory of Christ's words; it is she who from generation to generation hands on the apostles' confession of faith."[1] A doctrine handed to the church is an eternal truth. Only its context changes and so no closer

[1] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (Washington DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1997), Section 171, 47.

approximation to a truth can be obtained. Interpretations are only more or less correct and theology is concerned with deciding which are which.

Ramsey's view of models allows him to describe assorted models of, for example, the atonement, which have been used over history, as we have seen. He does not search for a single given truth, although he does contend that there is an overarching model. This, we have suggested, might be incorrect or at least need nuancing. The overarching model, Ramsey claims, is the best fit to the data, but the data in fact includes all the previous models as well as the original narrative of the Bible. Thus a best fit is only found by going back to the narrative. In the case of atonement, the model of love which Ramsey suggests is a good fit but does not cover all the data, at least explicitly.

Lonergan searches for an overall theory of the atonement, and does not find one. He suggests that it can be found in God's plan, but it is unlikely that any mortal will ever see such a plan. There are only hints of it in Scripture. Lonergan does seem to propose that his own 'law of the cross' which he derives from Aquinas, is the highest viewpoint of atonement that we can arrive at. While this is a neglected aspect of Aquinas' thought, it does not seem to subsume all other views.

Lonergan's method in theology is a useful tool, at least for laying the grammar of theological process. Without such we may find ourselves unable to discuss a method at all. His theological method, however, has been found not to describe either his own or Ramsey's actual reports of undertaking theology. Ramsey's theological method is implicit but consistent, and does not follow Lonergan's method. We have concluded that a theological method, while it may well consist of Lonergan's functional specialties, does not follow the process that Lonergan lays out, as our case study on his work on the atonement shows (Section 6.2).

We have attempted to describe a theological method which uses the grammar of Lonergan's functional specialties without placing them in rigid relationship with each other. Lonergan does accept that there may be some out of sequence overlap between some of his specialties, but does not emphasise the point. We have also noted that Lonergan ignores the posing of the theological question. Ramsey includes the question posing and also repeats parts of his method, as well as having an adjustable order of his stages depending on the theological project in hand, but he does not note the function of Communication. Our hybrid method, then, includes the posing of the question, most of the functional specialties specified by Lonergan (although admitting that these may change and evolve over time) and a controlling paradigm which ensures that one functional specialty follows from another. It does not dictate

the ordering of functional specialties, permitting the controlling paradigm to suggest the next step. It also permits a more flexible approach to iterating the specialties.

We have suggested that narrative might be suitable as a controlling paradigm in the hybrid method. Many narratives do have a means of proceeding in a satisfying manner from one scene to another, and the overall output of a successful project is often in a narrative form. The use of narrative thus enables the process of theology to be controlled by the question posed rather than an abstract, linear, model of one specialty following another. While narrative may not be the only available controlling paradigm, it appears to be fit for purpose in this context.

We have asked whether the views of two theologians, from very different backgrounds, can be brought into productive conversation. With our hybrid language model and hybrid theological method, we suggest that they can be. Of course, this might be for a variety of reasons. Ramsey and Lonergan were both interested in science and cognition, and both have something of a correlative approach to theology. Further, they were both influenced by the context of the age, and were involved in efforts to counter empiricism and logical positivism. However, the fact that a fairly conservative Jesuit professor of doctrine, and an Anglican theologian who became Bishop of Durham can be brought into productive interaction is in itself an interesting result.

8.2 Further Work

Both Lonergan and Ramsey wrote on topics far more widely than we has discussed above, and therefore there is much scope for further work. This is all the more so because Ramsey's work has been largely neglected recently (and his strictly theological writings seem to have been more or less ignored even when he wrote them) and Lonergan's impact has been largely confined within the Roman Catholic Church and, perhaps more specifically, a 'Lonergan School' of scholars. It is our view that this is a shame, and that a broader comparison of both authors would benefit both studies of them and the wider theological community.

For further comparison, both Ramsey and Lonergan were interested in education generally, and theological education specifically. Lonergan gave a series of talks to teachers shortly after *Insight* was published, and *Insight* itself is, of course, a book dominated by consideration of how humans learn.[2] While there have been some efforts to bring Lonergan's views to a wider education audience, their impact has been limited.[3] Even if Lonergan is only partially right

[2] Lonergan, *Topics in Education*.
[3] R.-M. Marroum, 'The Role of Insight in Science Education: An Introduction to the Cognitional Theory of Bernard Lonergan', *Science & Education* 13, 6 (2004), 519-540; T. V. Daly, 'Learning from Lonergan at

about how human intentional cognitive process works, he has a significant contribution to the area to make.

Ramsey also thought his view of cognition could contribute to education. Christian education, he claims, should be aimed at providing insight, the disclosures of the logically odd language of faith.[4] This challenge has not seriously been taken up, it seems. While Ramsey's ideas are still suggested as viable theories of religious language, the suggestion that education is aimed at arriving at a disclosure is not widely used.[5]

Both Ramsey and Lonergan wrote quite widely on ethics, which we have not had space to discuss here. Lonergan relates ethics, of course, to the level of decision in his cognitive process: we are to be responsible.[6] This leads to a concept of the human good,[7] and a theological anthropology.[8] While Lonergan insists that 'what is good, always is concrete' there is little discussion of this view of theological ethics and it would seem that much further work could be envisaged here on specific ethical problems.

Ramsey wrote a number of articles on topics in ethics, as well as editing a book.[9] He was president of the British Medical Association just before his death;[10] his work in medical ethics has had some impact,[11] and there has also been a more general assessment of his approach.[12] His ethical approach might be of interest and use and might also benefit from comparison with Lonergan's views of the human good.

Eleven', *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 9, 1 (1991), 44 - 62; D. Heading and E. Loughlin, 'Lonergan's Insight and Threshold Concepts: Students in the Liminal Space', *Teaching in Higher Education* 23, 6 (2018), 657-667.

[4] I. T. Ramsey, 'Christian Education in the Light of Contemporary Empiricism', *Religious Education* 57, 2 (1962), 95-96, 95; I. T. Ramsey, 'Towards a Theology of Education', *Learning for Living* 15, 4 (1976), 137-147.

[5] For example J. Astley, 'Ian Ramsey on Religious Language', *Challenging Religious Issues* 11 (2017), 2-7.

[6] Lonergan, *Method*, 13.

[7] Lonergan, *Method*, 28-54.

[8] Miller, *Quest for God*, 84-93.

[9] I. T. Ramsey, ed., *Christian Ethics and Contemporary Philosophy* (London: SCM, 1966); I. T. Ramsey, 'Moral Judgements and God's Commands', in *Christian Ethics and Contemporary Philosophy*, ed. I. T. Ramsey (London: SCM, 1966), 152 - 171; Ramsey, 'Towards a Rehabilitation of Natural Law'; I. T. Ramsey, 'Christian Ethics in the 1960s and 1970s', *Church Quarterly* 2, 3 (1970), 221-227.

[10] I. T. Ramsey, 'Moral Problems Facing the Medical Profession at the Present Time', *The British Medical Journal* 2, 5807 (1972), 214-215.

[11] B. Almond, 'Philosophy, Medicine and Its Technologies', *Journal of Medical Ethics* 14, 4 (1988), 173-178; G. R. Dunstan, 'The Authority of a Moral Claim: Ian Ramsey and the Practice of Medicine', *Journal of Medical Ethics* 13 (1987), 189-194.

[12] K. Edgar, 'Ian T Ramsey's Method in Ethics, Pt 1', *Modern Churchman* 27, 3 (1985), 29-37; K. Edgar, 'Ian T Ramsey's Method in Ethics, Pt 2', *Modern Churchman* 27, 4 (1985), 33-40.

Finally Lonergan worked on economics[13] and Ramsey was interested in the impact of technology on society, at least after he became Bishop of Durham.[14] Lonergan's work has generated some interest, at least among Lonergan scholars, although little work beyond that in the realm of academic economics has been done.[15] It is beyond the scope of this work to assess whether there is overlap here between Ramsey and Lonergan in this area, but there seems to be work to be done.

8.3 Conclusion

This work is not an end to the comparison of Ramsey and Lonergan, but a beginning. We have shown that despite widely disparate views on some subjects, the two theologians can be brought into conversation and their views can complement and reinforce each other. As we have noted, there is a variety of other topics aside from the ones we have chosen which could profitably be compared.

We have tried to show that Ramsey's work on religious language and philosophical theology should not be seen in isolation from his more theological works. This separation in views of his work, which has led to little or no engagement with his more theological works, is unfortunate. Similarly, while views of Lonergan's works are more integrated, especially with the completion of the *Collected Works* series, there is still a danger of *Insight* and *Method* being viewed as stand alone, even separate, works, ignoring the fact that Lonergan chose some of his positions for good theological reasons.

There are, of course, many other comparisons of the two, either together or singly, that could be made. More recent work on the interfaces between science and theology, or on religious language, could use the views of either or both, as we have tried to integrate their views, as a conversation partner. As our hybrid method suggests, the end of one project leads to the potential for many more.

[13] B. J. F. Lonergan, *Macroeconomic Dynamics: An Essay in Circulation Analysis*, (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1998); B. J. F. Lonergan, *For a New Political Economy*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

[14] I. T. Ramsey, 'The Influence of Technology on the Social Structure', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 119, 5181 (1971), 602-613.

[15] See for example: S. McNelis, 'Lonergan's Economic Theory: A Template Which Challenges Current Social and Economic Research', in *Fifty Years of Insight*, ed. N. Ormerod, R. Koning, and D. Braithwaite (Adelaide: ATF Theology, 2011), 175-204; M. Gibbons, 'Economic Theorizing in Lonergan and Keynes', in *Religion and Culture: Essays in Honour of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. T. P. Fallon and P. B. Riley (Albany: State University of New York, 1987), 313-325.

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