

Toward a Post-Modern Paradigm and the Collaboration of Science and Religion

E. Rita Poto

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The following is the conclusion to a paper of the above name, written in 1992 by Ms Poto. In the paper Ms Poto looks at the “moral problems of modernity. . . . I would say that the morality or immorality of a culture does not arise in a vacuum, but is a reflection of its ethos. . . . The culture of modernity is that which developed after the separation of modern science from religion in the scientific revolutions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.”



Institute for Theological Encounter with Science and Technology

Cardinal Rigali Center • 20 Archbishop May Drive • Suite 3400-A • St. Louis, Missouri 63119 • USA
314.792.7220 • www.faithscience.org • E-mail: mariannepost@archstl.org

. . . . would not a collaboration of modern science with the Judaeo-Christian religion somehow seem to hold a solution for recovering our sense of morality? Much of interdisciplinary scholarship already tends toward collaborative convergence. But in some instances philosophy may take the place of religion, so that basic concerns remain implicit such as in the philosophy of T.S. Kuhn --- while the work of someone like Holmes Rolston III is more on the cutting edge of philosophy, science and religion. On the other hand, in theologians such as Hans Kung and Bernard Lonergan the concern may be more explicit: in one a critical focus on both science and religion, in the other on the cognitional activity in the human subject. While these four scholars may be the main support in this study, others form a nuanced periphery. . . .

[Ms Poto then discusses Kuhn's notion of paradigm and notes the historical development within the Christian paradigm of the Middle Ages. She remarks: "The fact that such an alienation (of science from religion) occurred seems to indicate an intellectual failure on the part of the church. Yet in the face of an epochal broad-scale temporal upheaval, the authentic faith of believers carried the global Christian paradigm resolutely as the accrued deposit of faith in Christ and Scripture, even if henceforth there would be a diversity of interpretation from Christian exemplars (Augustine, Aquinas, Luther) in the new Protestant paradigm, a subset of the global Christian paradigm." She then deals with Lonergan's method. Her paper concludes as follows.]

In context here we have focused briefly on the transitional phenomenon between two historical macroparadigms in Western culture, i.e., the medieval paradigm rooted in religion and the modern paradigm rooted in science. We've lamented the divorce between religion and science, claiming it to be the root cause of the modern moral crisis. But also we've hailed the beginning of a collaboration between religion and science in a new relationship of trust and openness to the insights and discoveries of each to the other in the interest of the human family. It's a new and higher collaboration. It will be not simply a collaboration of theologians and scientists, but basically a human cooperation with God in solving the human problem of evil. (Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, New York: Philosophical Library, 1958. Harper & Rowe, Publishers, 1978, p.721). Our historical-cultural horizon is expanding. Henceforth it is to include not only casual connections but values and meanings as well.

If horizons are the sweep of our interests and of our knowledge, and are the fertile source of further knowledge and care (Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, Minneapolis: The Sebring Press, 1972, p. 237) what does the just posited transitional phenomenon between paradigms suggest in terms of metaphor? In my opinion, it suggests a medieval paradigm in the mode of a vertical horizon, a modern paradigm in the mode of a horizontal horizon, and a post-modern paradigm effectively combining what is good in each of these two paradigmatic horizons. Gaining a new cultural dimensionality in the rise of moral self-consciousness, responsibility, commitment, integration, the post-modern paradigm may be envisioned in the mode of a cruciform horizon. In faith, hope and love every minus a potential plus. But is such development possible?

I would suggest that Lonergan's transcendental method seems to offer a possibility for such development. It offers a key to unified science. In harmony with all developments --- whether in natural science, human science, dogma or theology --- it is the human mind itself which affects the developments.

Through self-knowledge and self-appropriation that result from making explicit the basic normative pattern of the recurrent and related operations of human cognitional process, it becomes possible to envisage a future; a future in which all workers in all fields can find in transcendental method common norms, foundations, systematics, and common critical, dialectical, and heuristic procedures. (Ibid., p. 24)

In the ongoing discovery of mind, science seems to have proceeded from common sense, to theory, to interiority --- and now seems poised on the threshold of transcendence. (., 83-85) When in pursuit of the truth, whatever the discipline, only self-transcendence can free the ego from some personally nurtured fraction or splinter of knowledge as if it was the whole. To thus free the ego, one way, albeit arduous, is transcendental method. In it one may discover the possibility of self-giving in love [*Ibid.*, p 241. *Self-giving in love means religious conversion to a total being in love as the efficacious ground of all transcendence whether in pursuit of truth, or in the realization of human values, or in the orientation man adopts to the universe, its ground and its goal.*]

such that one's fraction or splinter of knowledge becomes part of the warp or weft of the whole.

I would consider cognitional theory the infrastructure and transcendental method the superstructure of a post-modern paradigm, --- a paradigm which represents an entire constellation of beliefs, values, and techniques which can be shared by the members of any given community orientated toward the human good.

If my search for a post-modern paradigm has sent me on a brief journey into history as dialectic, it has taught me the value of history. On that I would agree with Carl Becker (*Ibid.*, p. 245. *Quoting from Charlotte Smith, Carl Becker: On the History and the Climate of Opinion. [Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell, 1956], p.117*) when he wrote:

The value of history is ... not scientific but moral: by liberating the mind, by deepening the sympathies, by fortifying the will, it enables us to control not society, but ourselves a much more important thing; it prepares us to live more humanely in the present, and to meet rather than to foretell the future.

This tree, wide as the heavens itself, has grown up into heaven from the earth. It is an immortal growth and towers twixt heaven and earth. It is the fulcrum of all things and the place where they are at rest. It is the foundation of the round world, the center of the cosmos. In it all the diversities in our human nature are formed into a unity. It is held together by invisible nails of the spirit so that it may not break loose from the divine. It touches the highest summits of heaven and makes the earth firm beneath its foot, and it grasps the middle region between them with its immeasurable arms. . . .

This description of the cross of Christ, which carries a striking parallel to the figure used by Ms Poto, was written by Hippolytus of Rome (early third century).