

Question & Answer Session May 5th, 2011 by Phil McShane

6. May 2011 01:04

Q. And A. Session

May 5th 2011.

Here we have the promised **question and answer** session of May 5th. The first question should be a help to all, even if it comes from a group that claims to be "low-level". At all events, I make an effort to locate what we are at in this **Sem 2** within the "normal reading of *Method*". This certainly should help those joining us at this stage. **Q. 20** goes back to my suggestion, at the beginning of this seminar, of taking as task the interpretation of the LA conference schedule. **Q. 21** picks up on the panel presentation of the LA conference, which made a solid positive impression on many, some of whom raised questions about it. I decided to add some reflection here both because of that interest and because it points to larger problems of the manner in which the *acquis* effects discoveries and their amalgamation into the cycling of meanings. **Q. 22** also faces the large problem of the elite membership of the mature tower in later millennia.

Q.19 Part of the trouble with this second seminar [for some of us] is that the first seminar was in our busy season, so we need some guidance on the minimal content of the effort that would carry us forward into seminar two, which according to you, is the toughest of the seminars. Could you please help the struggling ones forward?

A.19

Well, I'll try, as well as try to meet the needs of those starting with us in Sem 2.

So: let us keep in mind that, from an elementary point of view, in this sequence of 8 seminars, we are reading *Method in Theology*, chapters 6 [FS1] 7 [FS2], p.250 [FS 4], pp.267-9; 286-7 [FS5], + bits of the last three chapters of *Method* when we get to FS 6, 7, 8.

Where is FS 3 in all this, and where are the parallel chapters 8 and 9 of *Method*? Here I point you towards *Insight* 17, section 3. What makes this Sem 2 difficult is that our topic carries us into that part of *Insight*, AND we will find that this part of *Insight* lifts us towards an appreciation of the task of FS 3 in a manner that is more forward-looking than the two chapters on History in *Method*. Please do not take this as dismissive of the two chapters. There is some very sophisticated stuff in them and perhaps it would help to pull into your reflections the context of the Lambert-McShane Lonergan biography here: chapters 11 and 12, especially 12. But our present

elementary struggle is to get a beginner's grip on the relation of FS 2 to FS 3, and it is quite a tricky matter.

What was SEM 1 about? It tried to give us all a glimpse of what Lonergan did not do in *Method*: give a glimpse of functional research. The helpful parallel here was/is physics [see question 22 below]. It is helpful in four ways: [a] the physics researcher that we are thinking of is one competent in the contemporary theory - standard model - who is hunting for anomalies - positive or negative - in the data continually being made available. The anomalies are handed on - baton-exchanged in our imaging - to the theory-people, and they have to figure out patterns of inclusion of the anomalies in the accepted view. Q 21 will add to this challenge of inclusion: I am thinking the full inclusion: the effects on inventions, industry, the streets. Imagine this in relation to education or theology. [b] Physics, in its research, brings out the meaning of "cumulative and progressive results" (*Method in Theology*, 4, 5) that Lonergan envisages for theology, indeed for a much later theology. Physics is mature enough to have this control, this positiveness: not so theology, which is a shocking, indeed disgraceful, methodological mess. That is why I pushed us to thinking in terms of the Standard Model or the *acquis* right through that first seminar. [c] physics at present shows a gap in the answer to the question "What is physics?": I am not going to enlarge on that here, but think of the contrast between discussions of "what is physics?" that just talk about the simple process from data to theory to verification, and discussions that are fuller and pragmatic, reaching out to teaching and to technologies. "What is theology?" helps push physics here, so that eventually physics will enlighten theology regarding its teaching and technology etc. [d] "What is physics?" in its fullness is to come to admit, into its content, its history and its future, and here too theology gives helpful nudges.

What is Sem 2 to be about? We have it described heavily in FuSe 10. In its advanced form - which we are messing around towards thinking out - it is to have a standard model. In that present mess we have, most of us, a muddled commonsense view of interpretation. You might think of *Method* chapter 7 as talking to people of such a commonsense muddled view, trying to lift them in an elementary fashion. The chapter does not really push context: that push comes from going back - or forward! - to *Insight* 17.3. Perhaps a simple way to get into that is to think of Jack talking to Jill now: *Method* 7 is a set of helpful hints regarding Jill listening to Jack, and finally talking to someone else re Jack's meaning [the Appendix to *Music That Is Soundless* has an illustration of Jack having malaria, talking to Jill, who talks to the doctor... Worth thinking about]. But now think of Jill pushing for a grip on Jack's biography, and that even within history.

You are thus pushed to a larger view of interpretation and its needs.

Best halt there for the moment; we have a couple of months to push on with these elementary questions.

Q. 20 Some of us are struggling with the task of "interpreting the document that is the LA program". We need various levels of help!

A. 20

.

Yes, even I need help in this, and it is to come from you: and you are to help us all forward.

First of all, the LA conference could be replaced by any such program, as I mentioned previously: a Voegelin Conference, a conference on economics, whatever. OR, it could be replaced by the table of contents of the Bible: THAT puts us into the context of the second and third set of seminars [9-16; 17-24] but think of it as the program for the volume of Hebrew Literature. Notice, too, that in Question 19 above we began by reading another program: the table of contents of *Method in Theology*: a short puzzling document.

No one remarked on the oddity that I was seemingly asking for an interpretation of a program of an event of three days. It was, indeed, a trick question. We are trying to stretch our imagination to sniff out the dynamic sharing that would be effective in dealing with such an event. It would have been easier and better to simply take a document from the conference and tackle its interpretation. OR to take *Method* chapter 7 as a document to interpret. [which, in a way, is the central task of the seminar!]. The LA document was, I assume, completely written by Mark Morelli. I spoke to him about it at various stages. Detecting its brilliance takes quite a bit of work, indeed the work requires being there, listening to the program wind its way through time. [think of the phrase that come into so many good interpretations"you should have been there!"] I recall now Debussy's reading *The Rites of Spring* ... it took him months to "interpret it" adequately as "opening up the realms of sound".

The oddity of my requesting an interpretation of the LA conference - or of the table of contents of the Bible - is that it gets us into the mess of sorting out what is FS 2 and what is FS 3 and how they are related. And, yes, we need various levels of help: yet I halt, as I did in the previous question. We need to mess around here personally, and this is especially true of the effort to envisage building *Insight 17.3* into the heuristics of functional collaboration. The messing, the seeming impossibility of breaking through to coherence, is important for each of us in that it pushes us towards some sense of scientific thinking. Recall "never bitten by theory, no apprehension of the fact that Newton spent weeks" (*CWL* vol 6, p. 155).

But there is a sense in which I do not halt the first or second questions here [Q. 19 and Q. 20], in that I am going to have a shot at illustrating processes of FS 2 and FS 3 in Q. 21.

Q. 21 Some, from the LA conference, raised the question of the interpretations given by the four member panel of the paragraph of Lonergan from Volume 12, *The Trinity: Systematics*. In what sense could we say that these interpretations measure up to or illustrate for us the norms that we are seeking?

A.21

Again, we are venturing into theology, yet we can do so in a sort-of [which I wont go into] secular fashion. So I pause over this question as illustrating the reach of the present seminar. We have a single paragraph of Lonergan to interpret, where we take interpret in the positive and functional sense. And let me go slowly on this. First interpret in the positive sense is the sense of *Insight 17*: Recall the very beginning of section 3 of the chapter. Descriptively, to interpret is to talk to someone about something. This description helps you to view *Method* chapter 7 in a new light. The emphasis seems to be on.... reading for oneself? Late in the chapter - section 8 - there is the "stating of the meaning of the text" {the section heading}. What I would like you to do is to keep pushing yourself to view this - all this, any of this - in the "GRIP" of the view conjured up by the image of "the leaning tower". And of course, think of the baton-exchanging sequence of talkings that finally reach the streets.

First, I should quote the paragraph of Lonergan's Systematic Trinity , on page 473 of *CWL 12*, where the hypothesis is found.

"First, there are four real relations, really identical with the divine substance, and therefor there are four special modes that ground the external imitation of the divine substance. Next, there are four absolutely supernatural realities, which are never found uninformed, namely, the secondary act of existence of the incarnation, sanctifying grace, the habit of charity, and the light of glory. It would be appropriate, therefore, to say that the secondary act of existence of the incarnation is a created participation of paternity and so has a special relation to the Son, that sanctifying grace is a participation of the active spiration, and so has a special relation to the Holy Ghost, that the habit of charity is a participation of passive spiration, and so has a special relation to the Father and the Son, and that the light of glory is a participation of sonship, and so in a most perfect way brings the children of adoption back to the Father"

I am not going to venture into what might be called an initial interpretation, one that yields a helpful diagram of the four realities with some understanding depending on one's development in theology. It takes work, but mainly plodding, learner's, work to get that far. The grace of incarnation is a participation of Jesus in paternity, P, a relation to the 2nd Person; sanctifying grace is a participation in the active spiration, AS, [1st and 2nd Persons]; charity is a participation in passive spiration, PS, [3rd Person]; the light of glory, LG, is a participation in the 2nd Person. This takes some time getting used to. AND those 7 words give us a marvelous musing-package. "This takes some time getting used to ". Recall the quote from Carter on the first LA sheet for my lecture there, re "laying down memory" [later I make mention of Augustine on memory], and think of it not only ontically and phyletically but eschatologically [-!seminar 25]. This takes some time, then, refers to millennia of cycling and to the dynamic pressure towards a slow blossoming of *memoria* to which we arrive below. Further, this climb is related to the meanings of the four participations which grow in a manner in which the 4-hypothesis of Maxwell is enriched through time and through the concrete understanding of spacetime [see the end of chapter 5 of *Insight*].

So we are back to thinking about the physics researcher discovering an anomalous track, the complex hint of new particle relations involving perhaps new particles. "This takes some time getting used to ". The researcher likely involves companions on the job, a consensus of interest this, they sense, is an oddity of significance. The research community batons the oddity on to the theoretic community, and that community [FS 2] builds the oddity into a new unity of theory. Now, recall [d] above at the end of the second-last paragraph of Q. 19. In that fuller physics there is to be a genetic system of theories. The Standard Model will thus be enlarged, and the new contributions will be located in that sequence, shifting the sequence somewhat, both in past fact and in future heuristic.

THIS is very dense stuff..... it will only get lightsome as we battle through the 25 seminars. It is related to the pointing of section 3 of FuSe 10 towards "UV + GS + FS" as the dominant operative system of the cycling. To get a glimpse of this would require a decent background of physics [and biology! : see Part One of the website book, *Method in Theology: Revisions and Implementations.*], but I mention anyway [see the Lonergan Biography, p. 175] the emergence of Maxwell's 4-hypothesis, his four equations that became a new heuristic dominating all electromagnetic events in the cosmos. [There is more elaborate treatment of the two four-hypotheses in the third part of the website book, *Method in Theology: Revisions and Implementations.*]

Back now to the "4-point hypothesis" as it is called, and add an enlightening realism. Lonergan "invented" this in the 1950s [Doran's work gives details] but there it is in the texts on the trinity from the late fifties till his final 1964

text. It startled me in the late 1950s but I did nothing about it: I was still only a student of philosophy, and when I treated, in my first year theology, of the broader "Hypothesis of Intelligible Emanations in God' [Theol Stud, 1962] Courtney-Murray was interested in a simple rescue of the theological core in *Verbum*. Bob Doran has now successfully made it a topic [one could build in a reflection on *Method* 253 here, "making a topic", but lets go gently on!]. You might consider the paragraph, like in physics, as an anomalous track: What does it mean? It is, unlike the track in physics, a pointer to a neglected lift in theory; not then just data in the physics sense: and this difference is a nudge towards a new twist on canons of inquiry, indeed it is at the heart of the emergence of the second set of canons, canons of hermeneutics.

I would note that our way towards an emergence of functional collaboration is based on such discovery: finding by functional research into Lonergan's works neglected, overlooked, zones and topics for Lonergan studies. That lead goes way back to e.g. FuSe Zero and FuSe 1. AND at the heart of it is the discovery of the paragraph in the middle of page 287 of *Method*, which is to be a focus of this seminar, the one that says "" rewrite the first half of *Method*. THAT paragraph has not been noticed since *Method* appeared.

But this Answer is getting too lengthy. Are there enough hints to get us thinking about the CWL 12 paragraph in relation to this seminar and the next?

A full genetic systematics would give us a grip on the moves, the tunnellings forward, through John's Gospel, Origin, Augustine, Thomas, Lonergan, etc. What would the communal grip on Lonergan's meaning of that paragraph do to the Tower Community? "This takes some time getting used to ", where now the getting used to is in the context of the full effective cycle from research to communications, and thus on into the byways of prayer, preaching, personal relations. Spelling it out, and into humanity's global pilgrimage is a "some time" task, perhaps a millennium's task. But I make just two points in conclusion here.

First, there is a shift in the systematics of the present slice of time as given by Lonergan. Let us take it that Lonergan stands with Aquinas' achievement in the *Summa*. Then the hypothesis swings into that systematics - a relatively deductive one as suggested in the *Summa*, Q.1 - certainly [I skip subtleties e.g. think of Q. 32] at Q. 44, and is to lift the whole of the rest of the *Summa* into a startlingly new context of precise interpersonal gracings: How now and future-wise are we to apprehend the daily dealings with us of these Three Divine Persons?

Secondly there is a general clue to the dynamics of history. [useful to recall the trinitarian twist sketched in the metagram W_3] One would need here to have a communal advance on the nudge of Thomas and Lonergan regarding

"natural resultance" [See *Verbum* 144-149]. And the natural resultance I am thinking of here is the non-efficient natural resultance of presence of Divine Persons. In the pilgrim state there is a peculiar set of non-efficient, natural "pulls" on human minding - let me use the word *memoria* sublated from Augustine - the AS and the PS both ontically and phyletically lifting human minding towards a mind-fulness that blossoms - again ontically and phyletically - into F. But I skim along here. I would note that *memoria* {a} involves the six levels of being diagrammed regularly as f(p,c,b,z,u,r), {b} refers to past, present and eternity.

I have rambled too far: but perhaps the rambling points to novel trails and tracks of the next millennium, and to new genetic additions to the starved tadpole of present genetic systematic theology. Note, too, again, the relevance of the analogy of the physics 4-hypothesis, including the fact that its heuristic is a full out-reach of primary relativity to all instances of actual verification: local radiational structures are "accounted for" in the normal fashion of secondary determinations.

Q. 22. In recent discussions you have continued to insist on the need for some grip on the science of physics to share in the Tower Climb. Would you comment further on that?

A 22

The value of this question is its reach both into future and into the nature of our little human reach into the meaning of history. It points towards the need for the communal effort to arrive at a common basis of contemplation, for the per se creative minority that I have named *The Standard Model*.

Recent challenges have pushed me to muse further on the issue, but the musing is part of a long history, and its advances are perhaps best symbolized by relating two key shifts in my perspective, one in 1958, and one on Venice Beach California this week. The mention of such shifts are, for younger people, invitations to adult openness and growth. Both shifts were "walking" shifts, one in the countryside, the other - obviously - on a beach. The shifts were towards a better understanding [more and more identified by me as a chemical thing!] of nescience. We are, in this century, just beginning to get to grips with our feeble appreciation of the elementary things of physics ... the rest of our "understanding" is mainly nominal, descriptive, technically useful and thus sophisticated - think, for example, of the clothes' business in as many aspects as you can. But, within Lonergan, perhaps it is best to guide you to a serious revisit of *Insight* 17, section 1.2, "*The Genesis of Adequate Self-Knowledge*". That self-knowledge is just not possible without personally struggling - for some years [they should shift into schools in this century] - with that simplest of sciences. The maturity to-be-required in the Tower elite {see Method, 350-1} is "not possible without the prior development of the sciences" (*Insight*,

558-9), and **THE ONLY SCIENCE TO BREAK FORWARD SERIOUSLY FROM DESCRIPTION** so far is this elementary science. When I say break forward I mean normatively much of physics is battered by and trapped in the mess of imaging space-time. That is a problem being tackled in this seminar by Terry Quinn. What further can I say? The leap of 1958 becomes further refined by my identifying us, in 2011, with a new luminosity, as naming animals and not much more in this early stage of human history, the not-much-more being disguised in sophistications of technical competencies and linguistic subtleties.

The further I can say is that art can rescue us, especially if it is coupled - as it regularly is - by a sense of the unknown. But I cannot go into this.... there is sufficient of pointings in Lonergan and more recently I have *Bridgepoises 3 and 10*. What is important to note is that, without serious physics, and especially if one is naturally open to the unknown, one can carry forwards the task of commonsense contribution, thus joining such respectable figures as Newman (*Method*, 261, the end-lines). But the later Tower is to require more, and the next century will manifest the silliness of those who claim that innocence of physics is O.K. in working seriously in philosophy.

I would conclude by noting that this was the point of chapter 10 of the Lambert-McShane biography. Lonergan was lifted to this perspective by his struggles with mathematics and physics. AND, finally, I would note the oddity that the book Lindsay and Margenau, cherished by Lonergan - the heart of that chapter of the Bio - is not even mentioned by the other two biographers. Go figure!

Tags:

[Submit to DotNetKicks...](#)
[Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

Related posts

Preconceptual Apprehension and Evaluation of Objects by Bill ZanardiWilliam J. Zanardi &nbs...Q and A Session May 19th, 2011 by Phil McShaneQ. And A. Session May 19th 2011. The questions coming to me in these weeks indicate that this is a...Q & A Session, June 2, 2011 by Phil McShane Greetings All, you note that I am early with this. Three reasons: [1] it is ready!; [2] I n...