

## Q & A Session June 30th by Phil McShane

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### June 30<sup>th</sup> : Q. and A. Session

What is clear, from efforts made, is that getting this functional specialty going is a massive problem. That problem is not to be solved now. What is emerging is the problem of seeding a distant science. The central challenge is to push the parallel, in fantasy, with physics, that Lonergan initiated tentatively at the beginning of *Method in Theology*.

**Q. 30: We seem to fail on two levels in our efforts: {a} we have no serious Standard Model; {b} we don't know what you mean when you say that, sentence by sentence, we stay within the specialty. Would you say more on both these failings?**

**A. 30**

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{a} I have been pushing towards a standard model of cyclic collaboration - without thinking of it in such terms - since 1966. With the achievement of some growing grip on it I associated a gradual build-up of symbolic images. These are scattered round *Method in Theology : Revisions and Implementations*, but more compactly in **Prehumous 2. W<sub>3</sub>** is the key one, repeated in the Lonergan Biography in its two forms, 161 {flat} and 163 {the Tower Image}. That full image, but mostly the flat 161, raises questions about the mesh of general and special categories, questions I will get to in **Q.32**. But meantime I would note that this answers the question re "no serious standard model" at least in an elementary way. The schoolchild in grade 11 has no serious standard model in chemistry, but is given [often inside the front cover of the text .... ho ho that would be a neat inside cover of a new *Insight!! ... or Method*] the diagram of the complete periodic table. Nesting here is the histo-cultural problem that haunts Lonerganism and indeed all of philosophy and theology. In physics, chemistry, botany and growingly in zoology and human studies, the students **take for granted** [ a phrases worth brooding over!] that the study requires such symbolization. Here I ask you to take the Periodic Table as parallel to **W<sub>3</sub>** . In both cases it helps to see the gap between the first year student and the graduate. In our case I would draw attention - and this for two reasons - to the  $F(p_i ; c_j ; b_k ; z_l ; r_n )$  at the top of the page. The first reason is to show you that I am using an earlier version of **W<sub>3</sub>** in the book, and continue to do so generally: I really don't want to confuse the present generation too much. BUT you are wiser and so will note differences in what I write now. Here you note the

semicolons in the expressions, and no doubt can notice other differences: like UV being replaced by FS + GS + UV. {in *Insight* UV is, if you like, a preliminary version of the standard model}. But let us focus on the semicolon. What does it mean? It has profound significance, pointing symbolically towards a middle way e.g. between dualism and reduction: it points towards aggregism, a sublation of Aristotle's hylemorphism.

But what does it mean? Like the student of chemistry with quantum chemistry, that question comes later in the course.

Here I would note the general strategy of the seminars and the drive towards the standard model.

In the first seminar I noted the anomaly of the missed insights of Lonergan students - are many of us not included? - re aggregism. Two of the seminar members are pushing towards getting the insights by working at present through that terrible book *Randomness, Statistics, and Emergence*. There is no shortcut to the achievement. But note that, even if you are not on that job, you have the semicolon to remind you that there is a gap there in your standard model. THAT is the important business at present: to reach some luminous **sense** of the "Existential Gap" (recall *Phenomenology and Logic*). That sense, communally shared, will seed a later culture that steps beyond the general bias of Lonerganism (and various cultures of philosophy, theology, and psychology) against **understanding**. If you return now to those listed anomalies of the first seminar, you will note other elements of the gap, your gap ... and you gape at **W<sub>3</sub>** !

This would seem to be enough of a hint about standard model. Most of us are like first-year chemistry students, but unlike the basic degree in chemistry, [B.A.: **B**arely **A**dequate] there is at present no primary degree in .... *Insight*.

{b} This is a trickier zone, but think of it in terms of the chemistry analogy of {a}. An elementary text in chemistry is not a history of chemistry, though most of them ramble a bit. But beyond such rambling there is direct speech in each chapter. We are getting from one level to a new level of understanding, and the effort is dominated by ... the standard model.

Now I would ask you to muse slowly over our push here. Lonergan talks of the first four specialties as indirect speech and the second four as direct speech. But it is more complex. Overall the first four are indirect in that there is the pick-up from the past [of anomalies], but the pick-up and handing on has a direct speech component. So, in the seminar in which we are struggling at the moment, the interpreter is talking directly to the

historian. It is necessary here to pause and think concretely of illustrations or analogies e.g. there is the wheelwright talking to the chassis person in the automobile factory. The wheelwright does not functionally pass on the wheel in Nissan with the remark, 'you know, they do this differently in Ford'. But here, in our factory of meaning, we are dealing with creativity, with "cumulative and progressive results", and the analogy throws light on the cultural shift and the potential effectiveness of it. The researcher has, you might say, found a lead on a new wheel-making strategy, and there is a possibility of a shift in road-worthiness. The interpreter is up-to-date on current transport, and so is the historian. The effort is to pass on a "pure formulation" of the possibility all the way round to **C<sub>8</sub>**, and to those in local scenes proposing shifts of culture. "They are pure formulations if they proceed from an interpreter that grasps the universal viewpoint and if they are addressed to an audience that similarly grasps the universal viewpoint" (*Insight*, 602). The audience is the community of functional historians and they grasp the current FS + UV + GS.

This all needs pedagogy, details of disorientations to be remedied. The interpreter is not talking about Jones or Smith - or Aquinas or Rorty - he/she is talking sentence by sentence about an innovative meaning that just might shift the ongoing meaning of the human story. Try, now, to flush out the distractions in the sentences of your effort at functional talk to the historian!!

**Q.31 You have been giving illustrations of anomalies by showing gaps in present Lonergan studies. How about illustrating advanced, present anomalies that would fit with the best available standard model?**

**A.31**

**This is a tricky question in that the best standard model is not at all present in the community, except in the form of heuristic symbols, incomplete lists of which I give in various places, e.g. Prehumous 2. Various parts of my own efforts are illustrative of this push, but I am not here going to reference back or develop those pointers, but merely mention a few. First, there is the gap that is associated with this seminar, and I give pointers regarding it in Fuses 10-12, but most especially in Fuse 11, section 2.1, "Prelude". How are we to get forward to a decent grip on the second canon of hermeneutics? The serious move forward requires a sound grip on aggreformism and the movement downwards in human studies [illustrated by Zanardi's appendix in Fuse 12] in order to get the community towards a**

**control of the meaning of description. This is way beyond the present Lonergan community.**

Again, there is my research-noting of "the pure desire is ineffable" as a remark of Lonergan in *The Incarnate Word*. This goes on to the ballpark of interpreters, who at present are not competent to handle the problem, a deep problem relating to the possibility of a natural order.

Again, there is my noting of the possibility of a fuller view of "transition" - the first word in the title of Chapter 3 of *For A New Political Economy* - to reach for a heuristics of a much later transition to a New Covenant of a Promised Globe. The full rich standard model communally appropriated in the Tower, and dispersed as "living human bodies linked in charity" (*Insight*, 745) in a luminous dynamics of exchange, a new theological reality of global money, is a dream of very few at present. Still, such dreams sustain us in our climb towards 9011 and the "Arrival in Cosmopolis" that was the topic at the recent Puebla Lonergan meeting.

Again, there is the question of shifting to a seriously modern heuristics of **virtue**, a heuristics that would require a decent explanatory grip on aggreformism and on recurrence schemes [ my rambles on the matter are in the *Field Nocturnes*, but there is the precise essay **Quodlibet 3**, "Being Breathless and Late in Talking about Virtue". This is a quite novel and shocking ballpark.

I could go on with wild illustrations, but perhaps I might conclude with my wildest to date, concerning eschatology, where alas no one seems to have done any serious work since Thomas quit and left his early unsatisfactory musings on the issue.

Perhaps I might talk of this as a bit of the Theology of the Word, and some of you might think of it in terms of the seed of the ultimate Body of Christ. And perhaps I might give you a startling starting place by quoting a piece from *Insight* chapter 17: "Prior to the explanatory conjugates, defined by their relations to one another, there are the experiential conjugates, that involves a triple correlation of classified experiences, classified contents of experience, and corresponding names. The being to be known as an intelligible unity differentiated by verifiable regularities and frequencies begins by being conceived heuristically, and then its unknown nature is differentiated by experiential conjugates."(555)[578]. Anomalies bubble up when one is reading within a full heuristic, thinking then of a melding of the three chemoclitics. Think of the "single intelligent view" (*Insight*, 544) - unifying the universe - of Christ, pilgrim or present reality, of the word of the Word which is in fact the Word but in some mysterious eschatological

genetics. Think of the dynamic move related to the possibility of finitude heading to "fuse into a single explanation" (*Insight*, 610), and the single explanation being the Word, but NOW, in the magnificent eschatological chemical complexification of an eternal circumincessional dynamics, so that by "the Word we might speak and understand true inner words" (CWL 12, 521) in a strange incomplete completeness. What, then, THEN, (recall **Cantower 5**, "Metaphysics, THEN") of "the triple correlation of classified experiences, classified contents of experience, and corresponding names"? Could it not be that the patterned chemicals of the triplicity both of human words and of Divine Personalities be mysteriously on an everlasting path of a mesh of identity with us always incomplete in our "Infinite Surprise" (end of *Wealth of Self*) of moving towards the quite impossible goal of being "fully knowing as we are fully known" (I Cor 13 ; 12). St. Paul had it wrong; Thomas had it right when he noted the Jesus could not, with his human mind, comprehend his divine nature. Nor can we, everlastingly. But the word and the Word can be made everlastingly fresh.

**Q.32 Realistically, separating the general and special categories seems a nuisance, especially if we are interested in theology. Could you say more about your strategy regarding that in the seminars?**

**A.32**

**The four Questions and Answers of June 30<sup>th</sup> illustrate what my concrete strategy is. I note immediately that the illustrations are a prolonged comment on the word "separating" in the question. The concrete strategy is to mix as is convenient, and to keep luminous in that mixing the distinction of categories. Distinction: that is the key, where the meaning of distinction is itself refined e.g. by the push of *Insight* chapter 16. That push comes under the topic of Q.33 : it is a push not done by most, not able to be done by most of the present generations. We have, in the past 50 years, been educated into sloppiness. We need, each of us as far as we can, a conversion to precision, to luminous work. Slow Slow Slow. AND I would note that the conversion to excellence has two distinguishable [separable?!] forms, as in the cultivation of excellence in tennis. There are the players, who make it to centre court. But there are also the organizers and the audience who are, in general second and eight rate ....**

But they add to and support the ethos, the culture. But I am rambling here into Q. 33.

Back to the seminars. The first group of 8 is focused on the general categories, but we are not thus confined, as my illustrations here show. What is important is to lift the brilliance of *Insight* into the fullest context of functional collaboration. Equivalently, there is the task of pointing philosophy towards functional collaboration. This task is a clear sublation of Lonergan's effort in *Insight*: pointing to a non-religious grounding of philosophy. It sublates that achievement into the discovery of the secular answer to the puzzle of Cosmopolis. THIS topic will be a central concern in the Vancouver Conference of July 11-15, 2011.

The task in the second group of seminars, on Christian theology, reverses this work. In theology, at present we have, for the most part, a dodging of the challenge of *Insight*. This is aided by Lonergan's suggestive descriptiveness in the book *Method in Theology*. Many of the anomalies noted in Functional Research relate to that shrinkage. But note that in the first group we picked up on the pointing of *Method* towards "cumulative and progressive results" to get a symbol of the shift of philosophy towards refinements of the general categories. WE? It is always the concrete WE that are the searchers for themselves as foundations. We do not leave our ultimate commitment aside when we seek the heuristics of the dynamics of plants. Such a leaving aside might remind one of the manner in which Euripides' drama left aside the divine and grounded a secularization of drama, and generally literature, in the Western tradition. Left aside? Well, think of *Deus ex Machina* and of the ending of those divine James Bond movies!

What of the third group of seminars? If you check back to Q.26 and the answer there, you will notice that the searches of the three groups of seminars are meshed. Add in the pointer re "the pure desire is ineffable" that was commented on in **A.31**. This is all very deeply complicated, and there is little decent clarity in the present musings about world religions, about broader revelations of God. Indeed, there is little clarity about Old Testament revelations of God. We are edging messily to a new science of humanity. Back, then, to the end of **A.31** and forward to the end of **A.33**.

**Q. 33 I, for one, but I know I am not alone from contact with other strugglers in these seminars, was really beaten by this project of functional interpretation. How do I go on profitably with the next seminar on functional history?**

### A.33

**First, think positively of whatever little you have gained so far. I won't ramble back over the project as it emerged, or the QQ so far, but it could be an interesting exercise. E.g. Question 4 was about the turn to Lonergan's writings as strategy of finding a direction to get moving into functional collaboration. Functional research threw up some key things, and our appendices of Fuse 11 and Fuse 12 moved forward from some of them. BUT in an acceptably defective way.**

### Q.31

**gives some further idea of that, and allows a fantasy of what it will be like to work in the Global Tower in.... 9011 A.D.? Or, 2111 A.D., if we can shake up the present Lonergan movement.**

Think, then positively: we are doing the equivalent of reading *Method in Theology*, but strangely. We pick up seriously on the first three pages of the first chapter, and are focused on the phrase, "cumulative and progressive results"(p.4), "*cumulative and progressive results*"(p.5) . You probably never really paused over that, or over the pointer towards a successful science. And certainly not over McShane's emphasis on **Standard Model**, or its naming as FS + UV +GS. But are we not getting used to these pointers, and these names? Present Lonerganism, messing along like the rest of theology and philosophy, isn't exactly bubbling with cumulative and progressive results. The effort must be to push towards Lonergan's standard model [think of *Method* 286-7 for general categories, and especially recall Dave Oyler's Appendix {Fuse 11} on the "one can go on" of *Method* p. 287. Well, the one is Lonergan but who else?]

Nonetheless, we are getting a nominal feel for the missing direction. And, in the present seminar, we have reached some feel for the gap between the popular writing, *Method* chapter 7, on interpretation, and the solid task which, amazingly, Lonergan thought out in *The Sketch* and the Canons of *Insight* 17. I did not expect anyone to solve the problem posed in this seminar, re Canon 2 of Hermeneutics ... it held me up for decades: just begin to notice that it is there. Perhaps it is useful to note that it is there in the particular present debate regarding the "four graces", the "four hypothesis" regarding our participation in the divine active spiration, and passive spiration in this life. At the end of Question 31 above, I rambled a bit about eschatology, when we are lifted to a participation in Filiation. Now, either we tackle these issues with a full explanatory heuristic or we face the very real risk of moving into the sort of nominalism that has dominated theology for... quite a while!! Add, usefully, my reference to Quodlibet 8,

"Breathless and Late in talking about Virtue" to my musings at the end of Q.31. What doubly-dynamic chemical patterns are to be associated with the various personality-presences of God in us? You have no idea: but at least now you have a nudge towards the existence of the question.

The nudges continue in Seminar 3, where we all can have our poor shot at functional history, but where Mike Shute and Pat Brown bear the burden of picking up on pointers from the first seminar and on the appendices from Fuses 11 and 12, and try for a glimpse of two histories, or two possible sequencings of events .... a messy task that I do not envy them... and can you imagine trying for a contrafactual sequencing of cumulative Lonergan studies since the early 1970s?

But the key positive thing is that you are reading *Method in Theology* better than you did before, and better than the Lonergan school is doing at present. The positive thing is that we are, as a group, **not** in continuity with present Lonergan studies. Sadly, there is need for a clean break with this old time stuff of comparisons, pseudo-dialogues, ineffective gatherings, descriptively dense but explanatorily weak effete reachings for humanity's future meanings.

AND there is the positive thinking that recognizing that we are less than one tenth of the way "out" in our coming to grips with a beginning (2011-2017) of conceiving and implementation an effective global care. Recall the date given for "Arriving in Cosmopolis": 9011! That relates to phyletic growth, but for you herenow I raise the question of ontic growth, adult growth: the normatively-accelerating reality of going from 20 to 30, 30 to 40, ....always becoming a stranger to oneself of last month. Now **that** is a shocking challenge of our axial times. **Just strenuously** imagine you, at 70, reading the 17<sup>th</sup> word of *Insight* chapter one, *Renaissance*, with the full heuristics of **W<sub>3</sub>**, envisaging effectively both the Renaissance of the third stage of meaning and of the post-pilgrim rebirthing, reberthing.

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