

Q. And A. Session, Third Seminar August 28th 2011 by Phil McShane

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Q.45 You write of neglected notions as a focus of attention of functional history. What of the notion of being, or the pure desire to know?A. 45

We can begin handily on page 665 of *Insight*. There you have listed, and discussed, (1) the pure notion of being, (2) the heuristic notion of being, (3) restricted acts of understanding, conceiving and affirming being, and (4) the unrestricted act of understanding being. Add to this list the comment on the "critical problem" in the paragraph beginning "Ninthly" on *Insight* 706. You could then jump to the last paragraph of the chapter (p. 708) beginning "What, then, is critical method?"

To put it briefly, (1) and (2) do not qualify empirically as neglected notions. What qualify are (2) and (3). Of course, the brevity, while neat, does not help much. (1) and (2) are the edens of legend, of never-never land, of the human loneliness of great art, of the unwritten book, *Being and Loneliness*, that I rambled about once (see the epilogue of *Wealth of Self*, a lecture given, as it happened in the night of the death of an acquaintance, Richard Power, who wrote a relevant novel, *The Hungry Grass*).

It makes sense to identify the neglect of, say, Lonergan's version of (2) or instances of neglect of his (3) such as his distinction between two meanings of probability. It makes sense to complain of the neglect mentioned in the next Answer of "insight generating concepts", but what sense does it make to talk of the neglect of the Idea of Being?Q. 46 How much detailed history is needed to home in on a missed notion?A 46

On our track round the specialties in these seminars I followed the strategy of picking out "obvious" missed elements in Lonergan, but we could certainly widen our interest to the mess of our entire living in this 21st century.

Q.47 John Raymaker's contribution [see the BLOG] has reflections on method included, and does this not seem legitimate in view of the

definition of generalized empirical method on page 141 of *A Third Collection*?

A. 47 Yes, there is a way in which reflection on method is to be included in the mature form of functional history: the way is the way of the not-yet-existent How-Language [a heavy topic: see chapter 2 of *A Brief History of Tongue* for the start of my search: later of talk of **HOW** in terms of **Home Of Wonder**, and of a fuller meaning to "being at home", Epilogged, {Cantower 21} "in transcendental method" (*Method in Theology*, 14, 350-1). But the presence of method-reflection at any stage of functional history is the presence of the re-cycled meaning, an ethos of the standard model. Reflective pushing belongs - *per se* - in the next two specialties. The presence mentioned corresponds to the meant of Gem 141. It is a presence of a certain level of achievement., a topic which - accidentally - turns up in Q. 49 below.

Q. 48 Would you make a few comments on mature history in the advanced standard model?

A. 48

Back now to Question 46. Nowadays, as we mess along in the Axial Period, shambles are legion. As we progress - again a parallel with physics - it will be a trickier business to detect positive or negative anomalies in villages, churches, businesses, media, whatever. Humanity will have moved on from the dark ages of the industrial and industrious revolution (see the works of Steward Brand on these). So, for example, the search in schools will be for subtleties of The ChildOut Principle that lift the common joy of "little faces looking up / holding wonder like a cup"

Q. 49 Here and there you talk of conversions [or displacements] as in some sort of genetic sequence [probably dialectic is involved]. Say more.

A. 49

A follow up here on A. 47, and indeed on A. 48. I tire of dull - and perhaps simple-minded -talk of simple conversions - religious, intellectual, moral - grounding progress. What is to ground progress is the increasing refinement of such conversions. Again, a huge topic, and I dodge further writing on it by quoting a bit of what I wrote recently, as an Epilogue to a book by Cyril Orji on *Reconstructing the Mind: Lonergan's contribution of Catholic*

Thought. {the book is not due for another year}. Notice, at the end of the last quotation from Lonergan, the mention of genetic refinements, part of which are reversed dialectic disorientation. [The Epilogue is available on my Website Archives].. We have been hovering round this question since the first venture into functional research. Our analogy there was with mature and successful science (see *Method in Theology*, 3-5). A mature physics, which would include its history (see Fuse 15 on the Web shortly), is a communally shared vision of the Tower community in physics (it is not a vision shared by a B.A. in physics, nor by the odd *haute vulgarization* of present pop-physics). With that maturity (think ahead a hundred years to 2111, or nine millennia to 9011: See "Arriving in Cosmopolis" in the Website Archives) goes a maturing of humanity in history. This latter point is a key point to come to grips with. We are not really swinging along in a mature science of humanity unless it carries with it the maturity of efficiency: check *Topics in Education*, 160, line 16). Yes, there is a way in which reflection on method is to be included in the mature form of functional history: the way is the way of the not-yet-existent How-Language [a heavy topic: see chapter 2 of *A Brief History of Tongue* for the start of my search: later of talk of HOW in terms of Home Of Wonder, and of a fuller meaning to "being at home", Epilogged, {Cantower 21} "in transcendental method" (*Method in Theology*, 14, 350-1). But the presence of method-reflection at any stage of functional history is the presence of the re-cycled meaning, an ethos of the standard model. Reflective pushing belongs - *per se* - in the next two specialties. The presence mentioned corresponds to the meant of Gem 141. It is a presence of a certain level of achievement., a topic which - accidentally - turns up in Q. 49 below. . At present - in Q.48 we think about the future - there is really not much needed a little commonsense Lonergan stuff e.g. one can read the following from a grade 11 Math Text and "notice" {See note 1 on page 336 of *Method* re "whether concepts result from understanding or understanding results from concepts"). The text begins ""Mathematics 11 is carefully sequenced to develop concepts in mathematics. Concepts are explained with several examples, each of which has a detailed solution". Our present disoriented culture has an abundance of such simple instances, in education, business, government, churches, travel, etc etc. Perhaps I might add that what this shows is the need for the eighth functional specialty or some simpler commonsense equivalents. Too many Lonergan students get side-tracked into a pretence of scholarly life when there is that track of simpler reforms that need to be populated. And if I may ride my hobby-horse, think of the simple stupidity sold to students in their

first month of economics.... then think of the amazing fact that there does not seem to be any contact among the global Lonergan community with a single journalist who would rock the idiot boat!! This is a very heavy question. Let us putter around with it.

" the antecedent willingness of charity has to mount from an affective to an effective determination to discover and to implement in all things the intelligibility of universal order that is God's concept and choice."(*Insight* 747-8).

Whether we ask "what is physics?" or "what is history?" we are in the context, the embrace (*Insight*, 442), the **clasp** of that bent towards a willing effective determination.* That context is made explicit, its present best leveling with the times, in the slim thematization given by Lonergan of an eightfold functional unity of any science and of all science. This is the "advance from a generic reinforcement of the pure desire to an adapted and specialized auxiliary ever ready to offset every interference with intellect's unrestricted finality."(*Insight*, 747) This is the joy, luminously normative for the level of the times, sung in that Canticle of Canticles at the conclusion of page 722 of *Insight*: "Finally, good will is joyful. For it is love of God above all and in all, and love is joy. Its repentance and sorrow regards the past. Its present sacrifices look to the future. It is at one with the universe in being in love with God, and it shares its dynamic resilience and expectancy. As emergent probability, it ever rises above past achievement. As genetic process, it develops generic potentiality to its specific perfection. As dialectic, it overcomes evil both by meeting it with good and by using it to reinforce the good. But good will wills the order of the universe, and so it wills with that order's dynamic joy and zeal."

There are various footnotes in the Epilogue but I add only one here [see the * in the text] as pointing to a massive refinement of kataphatic contemplation:

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"The reference of this dense phrase is to an emergent trinitarian spirituality related to the identification of the **clasp** of charity with a participation in the personality of the third divine person, and the identification of our central grace with a strangely integral participation in the two other divine personalities(See Lonergan, *CWL* 12, 473; *Method*, 342). The consequent pilgrim dynamics sublates Thomas' reach for vestiges of the trinity in finitude, personally and intimately poising each of us as a we-four, sublating the "Christ in me" of *Romans* 8 into a dynamic circumincessional fleshed reach for understanding that "penetrates to the physiological level" (*Insight*,

763) and carries forward our trinitarian chemistry towards an integral genetic eschaton of endless adoption."

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