

## “An Odd Commitment” Method and Academic Disciplines

November 26, 2014

I continue to muse about the problems of functional collaboration, of seminar participation and of BLOG participation, and indeed the general problem of being caught in present cultures. No need to repeat what I said about Flaubert, Pound, Joyce at the end [page 157] of *A Brief History of Tongue*, on the problem of busyness. The difficulty we face is that it takes an odd commitment to step “out of line” for the sake of the future. A recent book I dipped into has the remark: “As we consider future changes from innovation, climate change, health, and all things discussed in the previous chapters, what might the status of the individual be in 2050? And whose world view will persist to shape the future of the individual?” [James Canton, *The Extreme Future: The Top Ten Trends that will Reshape the World in the Next 20 Years*, A Plume Book, 2007, 204]. What individual will persist to shape the world view? Lonergan, who died 30 years ago today, stepped out of line while keeping up the horrid regime of his life. What would count, he knew, and stated it neatly at the end of “Dimensions of Meaning” [CWL 4, 245, conclusion]: “a perhaps not numerous centre.” It takes not a little lunacy to steal kataphatic time and brood in and on the search that is double you three.

Re the seminar, starting in January: we pause till then but there is the challenge of finding a zone where you could enlarge on Lonergan’s compact effort. I foresee us being joined in December by a group that will be more beginners, and our zone-search is to help them: they, like journalists and economists, are our audience. I will attempt to tutor them on the side. Our combined effort is a little venture into patterns of the eighth specialty: so, quite different from Lonergan 1978-83.

Part of that effort is the blogging strategy. In the future it would be the domain of functional specialists in Communications. Here again we sow seeds: when might the general Lonergan community find that Metaphysics as defined in *Insight* screams for a second focus of implementation? Cannon’s book talks of the next twenty years, and now I recall sadly the end of that final chapter in *A Brief History of Tongue*: “Lonergan is now ten years dead: we could do him honour by burying Lonerganism and moving in dreadfilled detailed seriousness towards the inner foothills of positional and positional being in a concrete concern with the luminous flow of consciousness.” (158) We desperately need a few Molly’s to end this piece of their Ulysses with a triple “Yes” and to move to a Finnegans Wake, blossoming to a madness that echoes the madness of, say, Radclyffe Hall (1880 – 1943: author of the infamous *The Well of Loneliness*), to rise to the dying words ‘what a life!’, said “with a ghost of her old jaunty grin” (Sally Cline, *Radclyffe Hall: A Woman Called John*, The Overlook Press, 1998, 370). John then ended her present molecular poise with her final words, “but I offer it to God.”

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