

9. FOUNDATIONS OF COMMUNICATIONS

Philip McShane

“Look!
Hidden beneath your feet
Is a Luminous Stage
Where we are meant to rehearse
Our Eternal Dance!”¹

The format of my essay is that imposed gently by me on most of the other contributors: two middle sections struggling for functional talk that were to be bracketed by two sections of musing helpfully about our efforts. The form enabled us to make identifiable efforts at functional writing, part of the identification being our own bracketing reflections.

I. Contexts

My first struggle with communications, in the context of Lonergan’s writings, was in 1957, when the problem of Cosmopolis was raised for me by chapter seven of *Insight*. But it was almost a decade before it was lifted into a serious problematic context through the hand-on nudgings of Lonergan in an afternoon of the summer of 1966. After that nudging I paced the fields and indeed the *Field*² seeking light on the turn from the past to the future that was weaved into a dancing vision by Lonergan in February of the previous year. And it is worth noting that, prior to that nudge, I had the great advantage of a decade’s musing on the problem, a decade that tuned me to his search for an answer to the problem of effectively changing global culture. His acorn answer slowly blossomed in the Field into a tree that transformed the turn into a vortex,³ a vortex within each subject that promised to weave all subjects round a surreal⁴ scary caring tower of subjects.

¹ I quote from the poem “Someone Who Can Kiss God” by Hafiz. I do so from Daniel Ladinsky’s *I heard God Laughing: Renderings of Hafiz* (Walnut Creek, CA: Sufism Reoriented, 1996), 25. (hereafter *Hafiz*). Hafiz was born in Shiraz, in southern Persia, and lived most of his life there. His dates are probably 1320–1389, later then than Rumi (who died on December 17, 1273: interesting dates).

² “The field is *the* universe, but my horizon defines *my* universe,” Bernard Lonergan, *Phenomenology and Logic*, CWL 18, 199.

³ See note 10 below.

⁴ See note 24 on page 24 of *The Everlasting Joy of Being Human* (Vancouver: Axial Publishing, 2013) on Lonergan’s position as surreal.

I write in Proustian poise, freshly sensing finitude: might you come with me thus? : It's a piece of cake.⁵

In the summer of 1969, looking at the few shelves on music in the Old Bodleian library in Oxford, those shelves of God communicated to me the needs of musicology, and I weaved the communication into a medley lauded at the Florida Lonergan conference of Easter 1970 and as quickly forgotten as the *Gregorianum* article of 1969.⁶ The four background chapters tiredly added by Lonergan to that article did not help memories or mindings, indeed they helped us enthusiasts who invented the *Annual Lonergan Workshop at Boston College* after Florida to stay off-track well into the next century.⁷

It was not until the early 1980s that I began to struggle with some competence round about the fourteenth chapter of *Method in Theology*. Then I began to sense the mastery of its first two sections.⁸ But only in 2013 did I begin to reach the present view of the failed chapter and its brilliant seeding of an ethos of global communication.⁹

Previous to that there was the steady climbing of my eighth decade, beginning from a meeting with *The Canto's* of that oddity Ezra Pound.¹⁰ The decade of the *Cantowers* was, indeed, a climb of staggering discoveries, publication rejections and failed communications too complex to muse over here, but I would draw attention to the long essay of May 2003, *Cantower 14*, "Communications and Ever-ready

⁵ Proust readers will recognize the ambiguity of the phrase. The piece of cake was the preoccupation of a life-time. The issue of adult growth raised by Proust haunts the present paper. My first serious thematic of it was in the concluding pages of *Lack in the Beingstalk* (Axial Publishing, 2006).

⁶ "Functional Specialization," *Gregorianum* 50 (1969), 485–505.

⁷ The sort of stuff we were at dictated the structure of the 2004 centennial gathering in Toronto. The gathering drove me to a week's musing on the situation, a musing that led to my *Quodlibet* 8, "The Dialectic of My Town, *Ma Vlast*," available at: <http://www.philipmcsane.org/quodlibets>.

⁸ The essay of 1985, "Systematics, Communications, Actual Contexts" (*Lonergan Workshop*, volume 6, 1986), contains a suggestive question about the first section, titled "Ontology and Meaning. "Could it be read profitably under the alternate title, 'passionate subjectivity in the lucid closed options of the finality of implementation?'" The essay is now available as the seventh chapter of my book *Christ in History*, available at: <http://www.philipmcsane.org/website-books>. The suggestive question is on page 5.

⁹ See my *Futurology Express* (Vancouver: Axial Publishing, 2013), and the Epilogue to *The Everlasting Joy of Being Human* (Vancouver: Axial Publishing, 2013).

¹⁰ From Pound—backed by Flaubert's *La Spirale*—I rose to the notion of vortex. "If you clap a strong magnet beneath a plateful of iron filings, the energies of the magnet will proceed to organize form. . . . The design in the magnetized iron filings expresses a confluence of energy." Ezra Pound, "Affirmations, Vorticism," *The New Age*, xvi, 11, January 14, 1915, 277. I quoted this text in *Cantower 1*, at note 39.

Founders,” where I reached for a fresh meaning of Lonergan’s two field-trips, *Insight* chapter 14 and *Method* chapter 14. That effort grew slowly through the next decade into my field-flight, in the summer of 2013, of *Futurology Express*, chapter 14, “Structuring Systems in Towns, Gowns and Clowns.” On the road I had suggested a relocation of sections 3–5 of *Method in Theology* chapter 14 in chapter 1 of the book, but what was to replace them in chapter 14? The core of an answer to that question is the topic of my contribution here to the problem of instituting and fostering “the cumulative and progressive results”¹¹ that are to be expected, with normal-curve statistics,¹² from global omnidisciplinary collaboration in later millennia.

The question that haunts all of us that have gathered to live into and beyond the Vancouver Conference of 2014 is, **HOW**¹³ to bring about a break forward in a stale Lonerganism that dodges his crazy invitation to a new tradition of contemplation. The elements of future meaning are the local layered mansions of collaborative groups.¹⁴ Those layered mansions are within the ancient molecules of all of us. That skyscraper is emerging as a need more visibly in human housing, in salvaging ecologies, in ethnomusicology, than the usual elements of meaning sloganized by a decadent school.¹⁵ So,

one stumbles upon Hegel’s insight that the full objectification of the human spirit is the history of the human race. It is in the sum of the products of common sense and common nonsense, of the sciences and the philosophies, of moralities and religions, of social orders and cultural

¹¹ *Method in Theology*, 4, 5.

¹² There is a solution to, and a statistics of, the problem of evil that Lonergan raised in chapter 20 of *Insight*, but it is, even heuristically, enormously complex. You might think of it popularly and existentially in terms of the leading question of the eighth chapter of *The Everlasting Joy of Being Human*: “Do you view humanity as possibly maturing—in some serious way—or just messing along between good and evil, whatever you think they are?” *Everlasting Joy*, 77.

¹³ I boldface this word to draw attention to a central issue of these next millennia—the development of the linguistic feedback of a **HOW** talking, where the **H**ome **O**f **W**onder becomes radiant in every face, in every phrase. See note 24 for an intimation of the fullest Christian contexts, relating to vestiges of the Trinity.

¹⁴ The sentence is an expression of the core of the key insight. It is quite obviously an inadequate expression, and points to the inevitable flaw in my brief expression. To those in the know, it is reasonably adequate, but for most there is the tough climb, best with help, through varieties of diagrams and illustrations. It is a topic for the larger work I mention in the concluding pages here.

¹⁵ I have written abundantly regarding the extraordinary oversighting of the “What-to-do?” question in normal Lonerganesque talk. An initial help is Appendix A of *Phenomenology and Logic*, CWL 18, 322–23. The thesis of the priority of functionality over consciousness-identification is at the heart of chapter 1 of *Method in Theology: Revisions and Implementations*, available at: <http://www.philipmcshane.org/website-books>.

achievements, that there is mediated, set before us in a mirror in which we can behold, the originating principle of human aspiration and human attainment and failure.¹⁶

Metaphysics is, not the preserve of clowns in self-preserving departments, but a matter of the human story making globally luminous the mountain mirrors of dreaming ancient hills and tireless waves. We carry those dreams inside, in zealous but frustrated molecular patterns. Lonergan's *Field of Dreams*¹⁷ eludes the main drive of his present disciples.¹⁸ The old warrior found the elements of cumulative progress late in life. They are Gospel Fruit, binding cords and chords of the Symphony of Jesus.¹⁹ The disciples, in the main, find only notes and bolts blindly from the chords in a crazy busy deafness.

So:

“You don't have to act crazy anymore –
We all know that you are good at that.

Now retire, my dear,
From all the hard work you do

Of bringing pain to your sweet eyes and heart.

Look in a clear mountain mirror –
See the Beautiful Ancient Warrior
And the Divine elements
You always carry inside”²⁰

¹⁶ I quote from page 5 (header, page 14) of a Lonergan archival file labeled A697. It contains a typescript numbered from 8 to 23. Very plausibly it is a continuation of the sketch, from early 1965, of a first chapter on *Method* to be found in what I named—in 1974—V.7. This file contains nine pages of typescript that is pretty evidently a shot at a first chapter, and there are four handwritten pages there towards an entire chapter.

¹⁷ I am recalling the title and content of the 1989 film adaptation of W.P. Kinsella's novel *Sholess Joe*. Is there a parallel? Certainly there is a neglected baseball diagram right there in the economics of the Dream-Tower. (See the reference in the next note, page 163, “The Tower of Able: Lonergan's Dream.”)

¹⁸ I have written of the unshared context of Lonergan's heart-drive in chapter 10 of Pierrot Lambert and Philip McShane, *Bernard Lonergan: His Life and Leading Ideas* (Vancouver: Axial Publishing, 2010).

¹⁹ The heuristics of the Mystical Body, the Symphony of Jesus, is the central topic of my *Method in Theology 101 AD 9011: The Road to Religious Reality* (Vancouver: Axial Publishing, 2011).

²⁰ *Hafiz*, 5.

II. Contents

Foundations are persons poised in kataphatic fantasy and cycling-dynamics. The poise sublates the anaphatic fantasy and dynamic nudging of poets and dancers, peasants and mystics, of which I take Hafiz as a convenient exemplar.

Each makes their own, as stumblingly best they can, the foundational suggestions of Lonergan, linked here by me, fortuitously, with the versifying of Hafiz. So, the “critical method”²¹ that ends the reflections on nescience of “eighthly”²² at the end of chapter 19 of *Insight* sublates incarnately the molecular shiftings in Hafiz invitation:

“If you think that the Truth can be known
 From words,
 If you think that the Sun and the Ocean
 Can pass through that tiny opening
 Called the mouth,
 O someone should start laughing!
 Someone should start wildly Laughing –
 Now!”²³

Now?

It is both the elusive divine Now and
 The now that is called
 A *sacrament*
 Of the present moment or
 The moment in the rose garden.
 But for the foundation person it is
 A day and daydream moment of a mind
 Minding luminously W₃,
 “Double You Three,”
 In a habitual reaching-resting,
 “Double You Three
 In me,
 In all,
 Claspings,
 Cherishing,
 Cauling,

²¹ *Insight*, CWL 3, 708: the final page of chapter 19.

²² *Ibid.*, 705. There is the fuller context of thesis 5, *The Triune God: Doctrines*, CWL 11.

²³ *Hafiz*, 43.

Craving,
Christing.”²⁴

It is a minding contexted by
An up-to-dateness
Of globopolitical character,
listing forward in the foundational list
Of the nine familiar neglected bracketings
Of *Method in Theology* 286–87.

That up-to-datedness has its cutting edge
In the seeding symbolization that lurks in
A geohistorical imaging of the symphonic Jesus,
A haunting of foundational minding
In a yearning Ontology of Meaning.
The yearning,
A luminous dynamic of the full cyclic group,
Is a yearning for Common Meaning
In the Ontology of all and each situation of human beings,
All situations being
Piccolo-tunes
Within an Integral Symphony.

The foundational group
Of communications
Shares an imaging
Of each and all situations
That brings forth continually
The problems and possibilities
Of all particular situations.

²⁴ Perhaps a context from Hafiz would help your struggle here, wound round the struggle of Thomas. “I hear the voice / Of every creature and plant, / Every world and sun and galaxy – / Singing the Beloved’s Name.” *Hafiz*, 153. Add the hints of note 13 above. The Christian thinker has the problem of coming to grips with the beloved being Three and having more than three names: so, e.g., the name *Cauling* or *Calling* belongs to the traditional first and second Persons. We are in the world here of the puzzling of Thomas and Augustine regarding vestiges of the Trinity (see *Summa Theologica*, q. 45, a. 8). We are in the problematic of the emergence of a kataphatic praying desperately needed in this millennium. See the five essays *Humus* 4–8, on “Foundational Prayer,” available at: <http://www.philipmcs Shane.org/humus>. See, further, James Duffy’s contribution to the present volume.

It shares in a new renewing reading of *situation*
As it occurs at the end of Lonergan's consideration
Of "Common Meaning and Ontology."

What is that shared meaning,
Symbol-stretched
Spirit-sprung?

Each situation needs hovering over it –
Or should I not write towering over it? –
An eight-storied tower
Of separate situation-rooms.
These rooms all-round attend all-round
To the situations that are the topics, the places, of the eighth specialty:
An institute of government or crime,
A city block,
A campus,
A classroom,
A bank,
A temple,
A bedroom,
The seat on which you sit
Now.

Hovering over each in sacred global care
Is to be a strange topology
Of distinct mansions of meaning,
Topped by the caring research group
That notes what needs present care
In the being
And the well-being
Of that
Absolutely Supernatural
Particular situation
As it is
Thus superglued
Into finitude's glory.

Is to be?

There is the tragedy of a failed introduction.

“Hafiz introduces himself as Companion and Guide, Friend and Lover. He invites us to share his life, his wine and his heart, to see ourselves and the world through his eyes. If we didn’t know better, we would think he was courting us—and perhaps he is!”²⁵

We have been courted in vain by Lonergan.

III. Hand-on Strategies

The hand-on strategies relate to the single key insight of the content, and this is paradigmatic of the cyclic process, a paradigm taken from normal successful sciences, especially from work in mathematics and physics. But the paradigm wilts here in the face of the larger problematic of the failed introduction mentioned at the conclusion of the previous section.

I tackle the hand-on here in an apparently simple manner, but the readership varies in a manner foreign to successful science²⁶ and so lurking within that simplicity are hidden layers of difficulty of which I write in the bracketing sections one and four. Might I have continued with the sort-of versification technique that I used in the previous section? The possibility and the temptation were there, but here simplicity is desirable in order to indicate less discomfortingly the normal scientific challenge as best I briefly can under the present muddle of circumstances.

So my hand-on deals with the key insight in terms of two lay-outs of the task and achievement of meeting the needs of concrete situations. The first lay-out is that talked of by Lonergan in chapter 14 of *Insight*. How are these needs to be met? There is an illusory simplicity of three layers stated here in a convenient or contorted fashion: major premise of methods, minor premise of sciences, conclusions in and of concrete situations. A light-weight reader of *Insight* gets the point easily enough. A more serious reader, thinking concretely in terms of the groups involved and of the problem of Cosmopolis, may see the triple-layering as simply a strategic hiding of that problem. The up-to-date readers will see the key insight as a lift of their previous heuristic, a lift that pivots on a powerful local imaging, a lift, moreover, luminous—because of their antecedent heuristic—in and about their own needed molecular changes within the envisagement.

But initially, for all, the minding and molecular changes are merely a nominal hope. The key insight is simply expressed—“an invitation to see ourselves and the

²⁵ *Hafiz*, 19.

²⁶ By successful science I am excluding the growing flow of popular presentations. That tradition gained a huge lift from Fontenelle. There is a sense in which theology and philosophy, in the main, never rose out of that flow. On *haute vulgarization* and its illusions, see Bernard Lonergan, *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958–1964*, *CWL* 6, 121, 151.

world ... courting us”—as seeing now, smelling now, each city block or rural farm as under the umbrella of an eight-layered towering collaboration of situations. Each situation is a group of functional collaborators but with a massively curious topology, a topology the diagraming of which is left now to your patient climbing global doodling.

How is this imaging and its heuristic content to be effectively handed on? On the analogy with successful sciences my skimpy paper enters the cycling of progress, beginning with the group of collaborators in this conference and volume.²⁷ The group of collaborators, at present an annoyance to Lonergan, will ferment forward into various rewritings of the demands of the fourteenth chapter of *Method in Theology*. The embarrassing doctrinal shift will become increasingly effective in bringing about the death of the prevailing decadence in Lonergan studies.

But only if the initial group, increasingly living in an effective “apprehension of the group’s origin and story,”²⁸ gives rise in itself and in a growing group of disenchanted Lonerganists, to an effective sensitivity regarding and guarding how Lonergan “invites us to share his life, his wine and his heart.”

At age thirty he wrote, desperately, “what is to be done? I have done all that can be done in spare time and without special opportunities. . . . Briefly the question is: shall the matter be left to providence to solve according to its own plan, or do you consider that providence intends to use my superiors as conscious agents in the furtherance of what it has already done?”²⁹ Thirty years later the old warrior, battered by a life inflicted on him by a mindless religious culture, did not have the energy to write of the complex demands of effective implementation. That mindless culture now putters along around his poetry as a “MuzzleHim Brotherhood.”³⁰ The group of collaborators in this volume, and those they attract, have their own mindless superiors and cultures and monsters to face: might some few do that “with indomitable courage”?³¹

²⁷ Of course, I like to think of the group and its allies as part of that “not numerous center, big enough to be at home in both the old and the new, painstaking enough to work out one by one the transitions to be made, strong enough to refuse half measures and insist on complete solutions even through it has to wait.” “Dimensions of Meaning,” *Collection, CWL* 4, 245.

²⁸ Lonergan, *Topics in Education, CWL* 10, 230.

²⁹ I am quoting here from the conclusion of a long letter of Lonergan to a superior, written in 1935. The letter is reproduced in full in *Bernard Lonergan: His Life and Leading Ideas*, 144–154.

³⁰ This is the title of my gloriously offensive chapter 8 of *The Everlasting Joy of Being Human*.

³¹ I am recalling the Frontispiece of my *The Shaping of the Foundations* (1976), available at: <http://www.philipmcschane.org/published-books>, from Gaston Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 61: “Late in life, with indomitable courage, we continue to say that we are going to do what we have not yet done: we are going to build a house.” It has been a long continuation since then of unheeded saying. It reminds me of my loose

Or are we to be boxed into the dodging of the Beloved's historical invitation?³² Surely you must halt, now, Now, nownow, to read in "startling strangeness"³³ those five simple words of the 65-year-old master, "**it is a major concern**"³⁴: that hands-on reach from his typing hands on to paragraph, parachute, you into thinking of the Invisible Tower of situations that should hover over your sitting and your psyche.

"Once I asked my Master,
'What is the difference
Between you and me?'

And he replied,
'Hafiz, only this:

If a herd of wild buffalo
Broke into our house
And knocked over
Our empty begging bowls,
Not a drop would spill from yours.

But there is Something Invisible
That God has placed in mine.

If that spilled from my bowl,
It could drown this whole world."³⁵

IV. Further Contexts

Why, you may ask, do I add to my poise the poise of poetry? But the issue is your poise, as you sit, now. My audience continues to be the vague group of readers that spreads out randomly beyond my compatriots in this "crisis."³⁶ For these compatriots, my poetic positioning is not an addition, for they know and feel the struggle

memory of a saying of Pablo Casals when conducting once a final rehearsal, "I have been trying to get this right for forty years: maybe tonight?"

³² The Prologue to *The Everlasting Joy of Being Human* deals with the unaccepted invitations of both Thomas and Lonergan.

³³ *Insight*, CWL 3, 22.

³⁴ *Method in Theology*, 355. Bold-facing mine.

³⁵ *Hafiz*, 95.

³⁶ I refer here to the familiar text on aesthetic apprehensiveness during a crisis: *Topics in Education*, CWL 10, 230.

for their own integral luminous consciousness.³⁷ Nor is the weave of aesthetic reference foreign to them. Among my strange capers familiar to them is that other “14,” the fourteenth chapter of *Loneragan’s Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry*,³⁸ where I weave the thirteen songs of Sinéad O’Connor’s CD, *Faith and Courage*, into my thirteen-sectioned appeal for an earlier skinned-knee view of the Field of Dreams. That caper gives us a further initial context here in so far as you might fantasize what might emerge from weaving sixty reflections round the sixty songs of Hafiz on the compact disk edited by Ladinski.³⁹ Might it not be “the inception of a far larger work”?⁴⁰

But not mine.

Like Sinéad O’Connor, and also like you—are we not back at the end of the first section?

“I have a universe inside me
Where I can go and spirit guide me
Then I can ask oh any question.”⁴¹

And we can ask oh any question, but now strategically within our little mansion room in the “Dark Tower.”⁴² The questions are to ferment out of “the monster that has stood forth in our day”⁴³ including the monsters of Aristotelianism, Thomism, and Loneraganism and all the other effete ungrounded “academic disciplines” that so easily sit with the idiocies of the military-industrial complex, of financial murkiness, and of religious brutalities.

³⁷ A context is *Bridgepoise 3* and *Bridgepoise 10*, a two part essay on “Liberal Arts: the Core of Future Science,” available at: <http://www.philipmcshane.org/bridgepoise>.

³⁸ The book is available at: <http://www.philipmcshane.org/website-books>. Chapter 14, titled “Communications: An Outreach to Loneragan Students,” is a 90-page final chapter to the book, with 13 sections corresponding to the 13 songs on the CD of Sinéad O’Connor, *Faith and Courage*, Warner/Chappell Music Ltd, 2000.

³⁹ It is not, of course, a compact disc: but a flight of fancy can reach to the poetry’s regular expression in the musical patterns and rhythms of the *ghazal*, the love song.

⁴⁰ *Insight*, 754.

⁴¹ From the first song of Sinéad O’Connor’s *Faith and Courage* CD.

⁴² *Cantower 4*, “Molecules of Description and Explanation,” (available at: <http://www.philipmcshane.org/cantowers>) is a context here, with its explanatory—Tomemga Principle—and feminist lift of Robert Browning’s *Childe Harold to the Dark Tower Came*. But now I talk of a more complex Tower, with the present imaging conflicting creatively with the usual image in W_3 of the Tower of Able. See *Bernard Loneragan: His Life and Leading Ideas*, 161 and 163.

⁴³ *Method in Theology*, 40.

PHILIP McSHANE

“Out of history we have come
With great hatred and a little room.”⁴⁴

And perhaps even a little barroom, with “A Barroom View of Love”?⁴⁵

“I would not want all my words
To parade around this world
In pretty costumes,

So I will tell you something
Of the Barroom view of Love.

Love is grabbing hold of the Great Lion’s mane
And wrestling and rolling deep into Existence

While the Beloved gets rough
And begins to maul you alive.

True Love, my dear,
Is putting an ironclad grip upon

The sore, swollen balls
Of a Divine Rogue Elephant

And
Not having the good fortune to Die!”⁴⁶

⁴⁴ From the tenth song of Sinead O’Connor’s *Faith and Courage* CD.

⁴⁵ The title of my final poem from Hafiz.

⁴⁶ *Hafiz*, 79.

