FuSe 20 Z McShane, Regarding Foundational Issues

[N. B. The Text Proper Begins on Page Five]

This is the final essay from me on our foundational reaching. I begin with the December Lonergan Newsletter entry [a] then add the invitation sent out in late November about the comparison project [b], then off I go into contexualizing musings about our reach for a grip on comparison:

The essays added to the website are very much related to the 2012 effort to tackle freshly the foundational problem. Before I list them I insert a paragraph inviting new members.

There is a sense in which this new year's work, on the four forward specialties, offers the chance of a new start, and I am structuring it, as you can see from the short Fuse 20A essay, so that it is comfortably open to new members. New members may simply contact me by e-mail: pmcshane@shaw.ca. There are no obligations, nor even an obligation to continue at any stage. For convenience I divide participants into two groups: group A: active participants; group O: observers. There is no clear line here: some Observers may find themselves bursting to speak; some Active people may find themselves silenced by over- commitment elsewhere.

The new web-essays are:

FuSe 18: Ways of Getting into Functional Collaboration

Fuse 19: Contexts of Functional Foundations

Fuse 20A: A Functional Focus of Seminars 5-8.

Fuse 21: The Future of Foundations: The Issues

FuSe 31: Contexts of Functional Christian Research

I draw attention now to the omission in that list of **FuSe** essays of FuSe 17 Mc McShane How Might We Collaborate in 2012?

It is relevant to our topic and our orientation, since it is the essay in which it dawned on me that a focus on Comparison would be magnificently strategic for 2012. I'll get onto that shortly, after I add in here my pointers on the seminar from December.

Back to pointers, and forward from them. But let me go back to that present tense.

The invitation to all, given in FuSe 20A, is to first tell oneself what is meant by *Comparison*, and then tell the rest of us – anonymously if you fancied that safety.

The key thing is NOT to go into researchings, old notes, or whatever, but simply to try direct speech. That is to be the stance of these four specialties, when they are up and crawling.

This is an exercise in honesty and some level of self-criticism.¹ One plunges in, but not in total spontaneity. "What do I mean by Comparison?" You are landed by the question into a common sensibility: you know quite well what you mean by comparison until you are asked to say what you mean.² To help you on your stumbling way I draw parallels: I could have asked you to write out what you mean by [a] development or [b] concomitance or [c] probability. All three of these words are both in the dictionary and in Lonergan indices ([a] and [c] in *Insight*; [b] in *For A New Political Economy*). But I wish you **not** to consult either. In these three cases, and in the key one of this seminar, [d] comparison, I want you to think of what you would do

¹ In this second presentation I add footnotes regarding what we were doing. Perhaps in December you noticed that we might have been seeding the stance of "fourthly, as cosmopolis has to protect the future against the rationalalization of abuses and the creation of myths, so it itself must be purged...." (*Insight*, 265).

² The quotation below at note 4 helps but there are deeper problems here that are to carry us through this year and beyond. My choice of comparison as our foundational focus is to remain shockingly obscure to us all: it is to be a Gauge, a *Nomos*, of the dynamics of human meaning dimly glimpsed. Why did I not pick some other zone of the list of foundational components given by Lonergan (*Method in Theology*, 286-7)? Your answer requires this year's climb. No simple answer could give the lie to the statement made at note 27 below.

to simply articulate your present meaning, however slim or gloriously scientific.

A few words from me on [a], [b] and [c] should help.

First [a], which brings to mind my own unfinished³ struggle with the question, What is development? In my little article, "The Strategy of Biology," I quoted Paul Weiss from the beginning of his book on the topic: "Does not everyone have some notion of what development implies? Undoubtedly most of us have. But when it comes to formulating these notions they usually turn out to be very vague."⁴

What of concomitance? Again, we all have an articulable meaning, close enough to some dictionary sense. But not too many could fill out the twists of its meaning that lurk behind my index entry on page 329 of *For A New Political Economy*.

But my favorite one of these three is [c].

What do you mean by probability?

This third example allows me to hint about what I am at this year, even what we are at when we move into the sixth specialty, and into the search for a luminous answer to What do we mean – into the future – by *Policy, Doctrine*? Back to the meaning of probability. My own battle with its various meanings spans years, but I would like you now simply to muse amusedly over the beginning of the key scientific meaning of it, commonly lost to university and school text books.⁵ I share with you one of my favorite quotations from the history of mathematics: "In an epoch-making problem, the first of two players who scores n points wins. If the game is abandoned when one has made a points and the other b, in what ratio shall the stakes be divided between them? The

³This essay and this year, 2012, is part of the unfinished finishing. I do not wish to say much more here, but I recall "The Logic of Development" as a second possible doctorate topic in Oxford, 1965. The larger logic that is our present topic was then nowhere in the range of my fantasy. The question for me now is, Can I, might I, bring into the range of your fantasy the name *Comparison* as correlative to the full enterprise of seeding the global spiral that is to "fuse into a single explanation" (*Insight*, 610, line 9) a community-Tower of Effective Care. ⁴ Paul Weiss, *Principles of Development*, New York, 1939.

⁵ This is an enormous scandal of silly and lazy oversight in school and university texts, and of course in common speech. See the chapter on "Reasonable Betting" in my *Randomness, Statistics and Emergence*, Gill, Macmillan, and Notre Dame, 1970.

necessary mathematics all developed from the fundamental principles of probability laid down by Fermat and Pascal in about three months by a painstaking application of uncommon sense."⁶

Principles, doctrines, policies: if we are thinking seriously about the sixth functional specialty, then we are thinking of uncommon sense, strangely removed from what the eighth functional specialists normally seek to communicate to everyday intercourse.⁷

But what I would like you to imagine now is those two seventeenth century geniuses puzzling over some such sequence as

НТТНТНТТНННТТНТТННТТТННТНТНТ......

Does the sequence make any sense? Is it any way like 2 4 6 8 ... or like O T T F F S S ... ?

So: what would you say that you mean by **probability**? Indeed, you could push yourself and have a shot at saying what you mean by **emergent probability**. Do you find yourself slightly embarrassed, like the chaps that Socrates questioned about the meaning of courage? Or perhaps you could write down the familiar probability distribution, the Normal Law, in all its mathematical glory? At all events, this gives you some idea of the suggested exercise, making a spontaneous statement about a slice of your foundational self, your present meaning of **comparison**?

And perhaps you see now the wisdom of my suggestion that you write anonymously?

On then to my FuSe message

⁶ E.T.Bell, *The Development of Mathematics*, McGraw-Hill, 1945, 155.

⁷ This is an enormously difficult topic the problem of which I first adverted to luminously in the conclusion of the third chapter of *Lack in the Beingstalk*: A *Giants Causeway*.(Axial Publication s, 2007). The problem can be considered to be one of redeeming *haute vulgarization*, turning it towards respect for that inner layer of psychic maturity that is a neuromolecular presence of serious understanding. The Tower of meaning is to rise each millennium to a fresh plane of meaning: how is that community to ex-plane to common sense, to have street value? The problem in this essay is to bring criticism, whether in Lonergan studies or in the broader world represented by the people referenced here, into the Tower. The larger problem is to point us all towards the long-distance run to luminous home-running on stage and in street.

A Mess of Meanings to Shape.

"Why do I . . . the minority earth animal . . . howl in a storm of motor sounds ... for immortality?"⁸

So, let us move on from those introductions, two months later, with our collection of efforts on *Comparison* to muse on. We are reaching for a fuller grip on ourselves in our foundational grip on the forward specialties by following up on our strategic focus on the meaning of comparison, which in its fullness includes an explanatory grip on probability, concomitance, development.

And in its fullness it contains a pragmatic explanatory grip on, an effective integral heuristics of, the manners of human progress. The word *manners* is meant to conjure up images of comedies and tragedies of manners, quirks and quarrels of politics and poetry, of trenches and tenements. Indeed, I would have you conjure up, as best and leisurely as you can, some image of the whole human thing flexed out of Africa and Galilee and Oriental seeds. I nudge you here from my own Ulster Irish 'bally beg' - in Irish, 'Baile Beag' - a small town or a small home.⁹ I am thinking at present of an Irish literary figure from a little town in Ulster who made his wordy home in global prose, Brian Friel (1929-). "Brian Friel's career exhibits three key aspects of modern life and its drama: the status and uses of language; the issue of loyalty and affiliation; and the essential local nature of a household compared with the larger 'society'. This last aspect, which has been conveniently

⁸ George Ryga, *Sunrise on Sarah*, Talonbooks, British Columbia, 1973, 70. Referred to below as **Sunrise on Sarah**. George Ryga (1932-87), of Canada's first nations, brought controversial twists to dramatic presentations: Peter Hay's Introduction to this edition is compactly helpful. Sarah meets The Man in "a bold and unashamedly dramatic device to establish a reality which is outside and beyond Sarah's subjectivity and different yet from the dream-like unreality of the other characters."(**Sunrise on Sarah**, 6). In note 42 below I invite Sarah and Joyce's HCE and ALP each towards their own little bathroom mirror for naked monologues and improvs.

⁹ This is, to be Joycean, the hole story. You might check, if it be handy, the index to the book referenced in the following note under Ballybeg, but I might say that the hole, homesickness, is "the talk of the town", refined in the talk of the stage. A context for readers of *Method in Theology* is the question of being "at home" (14, line 14; 350, line 9). I am pushing for a remote future home of writer, talker, critic, HCE and ALP, " the almost endless series of different audiences" (ibid., 351) beyond the world of "the level of the times" talked of in those two pages 350 and 351.

labeled 'Chekovian', will be examined in Chapter 1 (The Landscape Painter)."¹⁰

I am referring here to a big tortuous book – over 400 pages – representative of a global culture of critical assessment, but what I wish you to notice immediately is the mention and occurrence of *comparison*, our topic in this seminar: the household and the globe are "compared," and there is the implicit comparison of Friel and Chekov.¹¹ And Pine goes on to comparison with Yeats, with Steiner,¹² and so on. In the first page of his Introduction, Pine quotes Steiner: "Only genius can elaborate a vision so intense and specific that it will come across the intervening barrier of broken syntax or private meaning."¹³ In our seminars we are dealing with a vast intense specific vision that is to come across effectively only through a global cycling invented within that vision. Moreover, within that vision, that private meaning of *comparison* that promises to shift cyclically the entire culture of criticism and comparison out of present sophistications of commonsense learnedness into a genetic global reach for ever-fresh manners of human progress.

At this stage in my pealing appeal I am in a quandary. Might I compare – that word again! - compare myself to Frank Hardy, my snatching his final address.¹⁴

"And as I moved towards them and offered myself to them, then for the first time I had a simple and genuine sense of home-coming. Then for the first time there

¹⁰ Richard Pine, *The Diviner. The Art of Brian Friel*, University College Dublin Press, 1999, 7. I refer to this book later as **The Diviner**.

¹¹ See **The Diviner**, the index under *Chekov*, but also reflect in a global reach on the ten pages 333-343 on "Ireland and Russia". The global reaching is the seeding of what I mentioned in note 3 above: the search for a control of the meaning of the geohistorical dynamics of contexts: ongoing, overlapping, intertwining, etc (See *Method in Theology*, the index under *contexts*).

¹² **The Diviner** contains an Appendix , "George Steiner and Brian Friel", a catalogue of parallel texts.

¹³ George Steiner, *Language and Silence*, Faber and Faber, London, 1985, 47.

¹⁴ I reach, as perhaps you do even here, for the "sense of home-coming". The woman in you might well reach for that in the final address of Sarah (**Sunrise for Sarah**, 73. I quote the text, with its dots of discontinuity. I return to it and to the challenge of address in note 42 below). "I am like the things I do . . . honest, efficient . . . virtuous as a scream. I will not be free . . . no, not I. My deepening madness saves me, though. I touch myself . . . kiss the pillow helmet of my dreams . . . and for a moment now and then in the dark, sleepless . . . suffocating night . . . I am whole and free!"

was no atrophying terror; and the maddening questions were silent."¹⁵

But our maddening global questions are now had by me in silent structures,¹⁶ and the problem is whether I can doff my Had to you in the ritual of theatre.¹⁷ Friel's stage directions before those lines read thus, in his pregnant italics:

[He takes off his hat as if he were entering a church and holds it to his chest. He is both awed and elated. As he speaks the remaining lines he moves very slowly down stage.]

Odd and belated at eighty, but hopingly sparking a fresh start in some few Lucky¹⁸ chemicals - some few who might feel the mind tilt frogwords in the tell and the spell and the well of the tadpole of history, rejoicingly hymning, "so you need hardly spell me how every word will be bound to carry three score and ten toptypsical readings throughout the book of Doublends Jined"¹⁹

I am raving, in these remaining lines, about an atrociously "id-entity"²⁰ swim-shift

¹⁵ I am using the Faber and Faber paperback of 1980 of Brian Friel's *Faith Healer* and will do so throughout. It is a page-packed edition, running from page 11 to page 44, where my quotation occurs. This should help your tracking if you have another printing. My references will be to **FH**.

¹⁶ Had? Silent? The problem is to share, be had by, a symbolism of a standard model (See my Website Book of 2007, *Lonergan's Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry*), just as popular consciousness has neurochemicalized the Periodic Table. Suggested symbols, named W_i , are distributed throughout the Website book, *Method in Theology. Revisions and Implementations*, or more compactly in **Prehumous 2**. Recent **FuSe** essays have been focused on the central image, W_3 , reproduced on page 161 (" W_3 : a Heuristic of Lonergan's Perspective") of Pierrot Lambert and Philip McShane, *Bernard Lonergan: His Life and Leading Ideas* (Axial Publishing, 2010). Page 163 there presents the Tower version, under the title "The Tower of Able: Lonergan's Dream".

¹⁷ **The Diviner** gives hints regarding ritual and drama (see the index under *ritual*), but a simple sense of that complex neurochemical shift is the picking up of a guitar as one shifts to sing to, for, with, a friend. We are lifted to a sense of how we might doff our had, how we might say hello, expressing, in a How, a "fuse into a single explanation" (*Insight*, 610, line 9) like the Wow of God. I recall a moment of had from Lonergan, as we talked of Dante and Beatrice, not a guitar but his hand raised, he saying "That's what life's about: saying hello!". Note 42 below brings this, literally, closer, perhaps too close, to home.

¹⁸ Are we not all, at and on some stage, lucky, Beckett's Lucky?

¹⁹ James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, 20.

²⁰ I use Richard Pine's peculiar split to stir up interest in the vast topic of this year, chemicality and serious definitions. I think it useful to quote at some length here from **The Diviner** 78-79. "Friel's device is to make us the medium of our own culture by translating us into the *id* of his world; we thus id-entify with the people and the psyche of Ballybeg. In this he is divining not only himself and Ballybeg, but also the other participant in the private conversation, the reader The Swedish critic Ulf Dantanus refers on several occasions to Friel's 'defining': 'his efforts to define and interpret the Irish psyche'; 'to define its main characteristics' This is of course the result of mis-hearing a conversation with Friel, which turns 'divine' into 'define', and which Friel would absolutely disown.

from flickering tadpole tale to frogbreast handsome, where "how every word" becomes every word **HOW**, **H**ome **O**f **W**onder, chemicalized with "a simple and genuine sense of home-coming."²¹

"Five Ways of Reading Faith Healer", indeed.²² But there is another and distant way, a millenniaway, where the four monologues of Frank, Grace, Teddy and Frank will speak differently to a subjectivity as yet foreign to us, Kansas-trapped, truncation-wise, sinagoged.²³ Are Grace – Mark - and Teddy, Theodore – Luke before you leap - talking to Theophilus, so that the fourth monologue can spiral your fantasy up with its "what do you want?"²⁴

Might your fantasy and your want spiral you into the infant twists of a new criticism – the tower Cosmopolis as yet only a child's wavering top - at the top of chapter 17 of *Insight*. "If Descartes has imposed ... and Hegel has obliged ... to explain contrary convictions and opinions" then might we not sniff the past-post-modern meal of mystery and truth and collaboration – "the need we had for each other"²⁵ – offered so long ago, and give our tongues a taste of a Gauge²⁶ theory of *Comparison* that makes interpretation objective, one great cyclic critic: thus giving the lie to Pine's roots:

The Irish psyche, and the nature of the Irish past, are subject to – and demand – divination, but not definition." Part of my pointing in this essay is that the Irish psyche and past demand definition that includes the chemistry of the id and the amygdala: they demand of critics of this next millennium a quite new home, homecoming, homeliness, Baile, Epilodge. My regular readers know that I am referring especially to W_3 , and indeed to all its mantric possibilities.

²¹ **FH**, 44. We come back, conveniently, to the tricky topics of lodge and "Epilodge" – the title of *Cantower* 21 (see also *Cantower* 22, "The Empirical Residence") - with which I concluded the previous note.

²² I refer to – but am in no hurry to recommend – Nicholas Grene, "Five Ways of Reading *Faith Healer*", *The Cambridge Companion to Brian Friel*, edited by Anthony Roche, CUP, 2006.

²³ First, excuse the terrible pun, with its reference not only to Catholicism being agog to sin, but also to the hope of the colonial well of Sychar of unbuilt worship (**John** 4: 20, 24). All three topics require not just books but massive cultural shifting. We have to meet the wizard within of serious understanding which is so alien to critics and cultures, the yellow-brick golden road quite **id-y** –think of the axial superego – beyond the sadly truncated consciousness of the international talkers typified by Friel and Pine. Is this *The Enemy Within* (Friel, 1979), the friendly seed of homesickness, the goad home?

²⁴ **FH** 42. The same question is the first question, the first stage-strut of Jesus, in the fourth Gospel, **John** 1 : 38. ²⁵ *Ibid*.

²⁶ I am thinking here of the advance to a more coherent perspective in that simplest of sciences, physics. See Richard Healey, *Gauging What's Real. The Conceptual Foundations of Contemporary Gauge Theory*, Oxford University Press, 2007. Why should we expect that gauging human interactions should be simpler?

"Interpretation is of course subjective. If it were not, not only would there be no disagreement (as signaled earlier in Steiner's quotation of Descartes, p. 186) but there would be no critics, or simply one critic."²⁷

"I began to sacrifice my life ... my dreams ... my personal ambitions ... to create responsible social animals out of each of you. My own fulfillment took the form of fantasies."²⁸

This is all madly remote. I invited you, in December 2011, to burst out in pseudospontaneity on *Comparison*. I write now to nudge your musings as non-critics of yourselves in that previous outburst.²⁹ And I add to the musings the madness of supposing that you were adequate future critics in the first outburst, "not treating of objects without taking into account the corresponding operations of the subject; not treating of the subject's operations without taking into account the corresponding objects, "³⁰ which you were not, no more than I am. But the musing tunes us up to the shift from myth to mystery called for. "Delight and suffering, laughter and tears, joy and sorrow, aspiration and frustration, achievement and humour, stand not within practicality but above it."³¹ You, as I ask you, "can pause and with a smile or a forced grin what the drama, what you yourself are about"³² about about.³³

²⁷ **The Diviner**, 357.

²⁸ Sunrise on Sarah, 66.

²⁹ This twisted pointing reaches towards the heuristic challenge of the year 2012. For instance, can the critic be present in *Completion (Method in Theology*, 250), a standard model, entering into a fresh lift of *Comparison*? Note 33 swirls round the required tone, the needed self-taste.

³⁰ Lonergan, A Third Collection, 141.

³¹ Insight, 261.

³² Ibid.

³³(about)³ is a symbol I introduced in the *Cantowers*. It points to the general form of self-luminousness made specific in such a presence as "the discernment of discernment of discernment". (See the conclusion to chapter one of *The Redress of Poise*. The book points in the same direction as this essay, but in more elementary fashion. It parallels Seamas Heaney's *Redress of Poetry* as this echoes **The Diviner**.)

My musing, my "maddening questions", turn you to the fantasy that aspiration and frustration might yet stand within practicality, making the critic vulnerable and the stage weave round the box-office and the street-queue. We are reaching here beyond Peter Brook's sense of Molly Sweeney,³⁴ and beyond the life-longing of Brian Friel. "Molly Sweeney's almost complete lack of reference to anything beyond the contours of her unsighted mindscape is entirely expressive of the myth which Friel has spent his life narrating."³⁵

The mess of me and you atilt to shapeshift is the topic of the end of *Insight* chapter 7 and the beginning of chapter 17. The topic is to be lifted arduously and multilingually into the full cyclic task named *Comparison*, "*Comparison* examines the completed assembly,"³⁶ author, critic, actor, audience, pilgrims. The mature task is a distant business of "Arriving in Cosmopolis,"³⁷ calling in slowly, into each **issue**,³⁸ a quite new terrifying yet lovely and loving world of moral, intellectual and religious conversions.³⁹ It is a world of shaky authenticity, where Frank and Sarah are more at home, "our only guide is our homesickness,"⁴⁰ than Tom, Dick and Mary, priest and politician.

I reluctantly end with staccatos of strange pointings to the five genera of "maddening questions", their issues, their generations.⁴¹ Can we start, from our

³⁴ Peter Brook – the author of that classic, **The Empty Space** (1968) – is quoted on the cover of Friel's **Molly Sweeney** (Loughcrew, Gallery Press, 1994): "Of all contemporary authors, there is no one I admire more highly than Brian Friel Molly Sweeney is magnificent and I read it with great joy."

³⁵ **The Diviner**, 358.

³⁶ Method in Theology, 250.

³⁷ "Arriving in Cosmopolis", available in my Website Archives, gives a date to the mature business: 9011 A.D.
³⁸ I bold-face the word **issue** here, with a meaning-strategy of bold-facing that I invented when writing the 41 *Field Nocturnes*. It draws you attention to the fact that the word, indeed all this text, is a within of the **issue** that is you. FuSe 21 brings that meaning of *issue* into focus, or rather – shifting from me-ning to you-ning – tries, invites. It obviously give a frighteningly fresh meaning to Frank Hardy on stage, to you here-now, now-here, down stage. Join yourself in the bathroom-box of note 42 below.

³⁹ I would have you contextualize these too familiar names with the twistings of human searchings, the characters in the dramas of your literatures and your neighbours, patching together a paddle-pattern in "the pushing stream of life Perhaps Friel succeeds because he is not afraid of pieties, he does not embrace them simply because represent some Lawrentian life-force. There comes a point, which becomes clear, particularly in his later plays, where 'piety', in seeking to remain within the borders of the moral code, becomes absurd and grotesque." (**The Diviner**, 85)

⁴⁰ Hermann Hesse, *Steppenwolf*, Penguin , 179. Hermine is talking to Harry.

⁴¹ Generations recalls Quodlibet 8, "The Dialectic of My Town, Ma Vlast"

shabby monologues⁴² regarding comparison, into these next three seminars and rise to "a displacement of the sensitive representations of spiritual issues"?⁴³ All the world's a stage, and it is a stage towards a chemical eschatological lightsomeness of what is now liminal, clouded and trapped in axial linguistic feedblock.

⁴² I end, like any good class, with suggestions for personal exercises. Of course, there are the 10 exercises of Cantower 26, "Refined Woman and Feynman", section 4: each a possible improv. But in particular there was the exercise for this seminar of a spontaneous scribbling on what you mean by Comparison. But now what if it, or a bit of it, were taken as a monologue? Yes, you could try it on an audience like Frank or Sarah. Or do a Jack and Jill thing, adding the problematic tone of strange unreal realism (Lonergan, "Cognitional Structure", Collection, CWL 4, 215-19). But might not Jill meet Jill and Jack meet Jack in Michael Jackson's Mirror? Talk out to self, like Frank or Grace (FH 11, 19), a villanella of comparison yet to be met or passed by, or inloading the lists of Frank and Grace, "Badrallach, Kilmore, Llanfaethlu, Llanfechell, Kincardine, Kinross, ..." (FH, 24), finding your own chanted list of missed villages, passed homes: Ballyma, Ballyda, Ballyme, Ballymate, Ballymind, Ballyultimate ... So it is a matter of Grace saving Grace, Frank being frank, not "as I moved across that yard towards them" (FH 44) but as I moved towards the bathroom mirror, ape-naked, impossibly meeting myself in both eyes, touching myself like Sarah or Merleau-Ponty (desperate for objectivity through lonely touch in the final scribbles of his last incomplete book, The Visible and the Invisible, 1968; Fr. 1964: see Field Nocturne 28, "A Touching of Touching: Getting on Your Nerves", with its context, Field Nocturne 24, "Merleau-Ponty and Other Mudfish"). "... virtuous as a scream. My deepening madness saves me, though. I touch myself ... kiss the pillow helmet of my dreams . . . and for a moment now and then in the dark, sleepless . . . suffocating night . . . I am whole and free! I turn, my body and my mind, to watch the sunrise ... " (Sunrise on Sarah, 73)

⁴³ Insight, 572.