

## Creeping into Functional Collaboration

My aim here is to be as simple as possible. Don't fuss, then, about my footnotes, which broaden the musings.

*Lonerган Gatherings 3* talked of entering into the project by thinking about ways of getting implementation,<sup>1</sup> even in tiny forms, especially in the minding of things economic. There my focus was on the external implementation, FS<sub>8</sub> going to C<sub>9</sub>. Here I am thinking, first, of the other end: how starts might be made in FS<sub>1</sub>.<sup>2</sup>

It helps, in thinking of such starts, to muse about ills that hover over your neighborhood or over larger neighborhoods.<sup>3</sup> These are regularly ills that are not the concern of philosophy or theology, where "academic disciplines"<sup>4</sup> rather than global cares hold the minds of teachers and students of Lonergan's stuff. What we need is a new mood of viewing the past and the present. The mood has to be generated by hopeful critical creative imagination. "Is this street, this flow of people and banks and slogans and schools, the best we can do?"<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Recall the definition of metaphysics at the end of page 416 of *Insight*: "Explicit metaphysics is the conception, affirmation, and implementation of the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being." It was only in the later edition that Fr. Crowe took seriously *implementation* as worthy of indexing. It was not, nor indeed is it now, part of the ethos of academic philosophy. The index is still pretty defective on the matter.

<sup>2</sup> I talk in the text of the handing on to the second specialty, but you may push on to think of other relatings (see *The Allure of the Compelling Genius of History*, p. 188 for the diagram of Communications). A functional researcher may find something that could nudge a historian or the foundational group. The big nudge from FS<sub>4</sub> to the foundational group, of course, is the one I home in on below in the text: the grim self-disillusionment of the 1833 Overture.

<sup>3</sup> *The Allure of the Compelling Genius of History*, chapter 16, "Communications and Metaphysics as Science," gives hints within a fresh context.

<sup>4</sup> The last words on the first page (3) of *Method in Theology*.

<sup>5</sup> Always, for me, there is the haunting question, the positive answer to which has to dominate the ethos of those committed to The Leaning Tower of Able. I the question raised in the first

With or without that start in heuristic hope, the key attitude we need to foster is some existential excitement about recycling, expressed in the statement, “this is worth recycling!”<sup>6</sup> *This* is a very open heuristic word of pointing. It may be an ill to be corrected—dam-building in Tibet<sup>7</sup> or strip-mining in West Virginia<sup>8</sup> or school-bullying next door<sup>9</sup>—or it may be a small or large kindness ‘without borders,’ or a view expressed in an ancient or new document.<sup>10</sup>

But perhaps it is useful—we are aiming at immediate possibilities within the study of Lonergan—to think first of documents, of writings of or about Lonergan. We could get lost here in details: we might have in mind some effort of our own or of our professor, some section of Lonergan’s work. I think myself here of the worth of recycling page 250 of *Method*, on which I have spent decades, in which my colleagues seem conspicuously lacking in interest.<sup>11</sup>

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essay: “Do you view humanity as possibly maturing – in some serious way – or just messing along between good and evil, whatever you think they are?” Well, what say you?

<sup>6</sup> This is the core question that runs through all my reflections on the first specialty. The chapters in *Allure* on the topic – chapter 6, “Research Common Sense and its Subject” and chapter 9, “Research and the Notion of Judgment” – are backed by the book-length 10 *FuSe* essays: *FuSe* Zero–9.

<sup>7</sup> See Michael Buckley, *Meltdown in Tibet: China’s Reckless Destruction of Ecosystems from the Highlands of Tibet to the Deltas of Asia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

<sup>8</sup> One can easily Google this for various areas in the U.S. West Virginia is on my mind through reading a recent novel by John Grisham, *The Grey Mountain*. It is not great literature, but it makes the point. One might think of a film that would parallel *Erin Brockovich*, and add sophistication to the aesthetic weaponry, there, of boobs. But the full context of the aesthetic opposition is Lonergan’s heuristic musing at the end of his lecture on art, *Topics in Education*, CWL 10, 232.

<sup>9</sup> Bad conceptualist teaching dominates schools in most of the world. It is an entrenched global ethos. What, you may muse, is the effective way of recycling ‘it’? What is meant here by ‘it’? Is it not the sets of whats involved? The first two chapters of *The Allure of the Compelling Genius of History* add novelty to the problem: chapter 1, “Sow What” and chapter 2, “Whatshow.”

<sup>10</sup> The context pertinent to all this is the functionally transposed paragraph of *Insight* on the turn of the page at 609-10. Massively remote in meaning at present. How are we to recycle it?

<sup>11</sup> On that topic see Patrick Brown’s excellent essay, available on my website *FuSe* 14B as “[Some Notes on the Development of Method 250.](#)”

The big jump—taking a lot of little practice stumblings in this next decade—is to switch or twist to the practical optimistic thinking of functional cycling. You have noticed something worth recycling: think now of **giving notice of it** to someone in “the next group” (FS<sub>2</sub>). We need to think out as well as we can the effective meaning of **giving notice**. Think of various forms of industrial systems of **passing on effectively**: there is a way of getting the wheels to the axle, the bulb to the lamp. You may even have great tentative suggestions about the meaning of the document: they can color helpfully the handing on.

You may have feeble or fantastically brilliant practical suggestions. Think of the comments of Feynman on the failed *Challenger* launch, quite unusually brilliant from someone who, supposedly, lived in the world of theory.<sup>12</sup> The level of your competence in suggesting depends on the level of your grip on, being gripped by, the up-to-date Standard Model.<sup>13</sup> AND it is here where existential tensions occur.<sup>14</sup> Let us pause over this.

Lonergan produced a shockingly new, layered, complex of innovations in the standard model of global caring. My best shot at intimating that shocking lift of Jesus’ Quest is *The Allure of the Compelling Genius of History*. Our terrible need is to sense the existential gap between present Lonergan studies and the heuristics of the Global Care he invented.<sup>15</sup> So, you, functional researcher, and the next person in the cycle, from the group of interpreters, find that there is tough work to be done in unlearning and learning.

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<sup>12</sup> See John Gibbin and Mary Gibbin, *Richard Feynman: A Life in Science* (New York: Plume Books, 1998), the index under *Rogers Commission*, especially, 229-38.

<sup>13</sup> Symbolized by FS + UV + GS: a first glimpses of its meaning is to be had in section 3 of *FuSe* 10, “[Contexts of Functional Interpretation](#).”

<sup>14</sup> Phenomenology and Logic, CWL 18, end.

<sup>15</sup> I think of him as a foster father, with history stepping up in these centuries to be the mother of the new model of global care.

In the present situation, you are not really talking to a member of a group of interpreters, but to people in the same muddle of confining Lonerganism, particularly and more effectively to those who are beginning to have suspicions about its confinement. There must emerge a vocal creative minority that is effective.<sup>16</sup> So, really, “this is worth recycling” is a cry or whisper with a vastly broader meaning: the worthy recycling means that we have to break—“even though it is difficult and laborious,”<sup>17</sup> with the confinement.

The hope is that the slogan, with an addition, becomes an ethos: “this is worth breakingly recycling,” where the break is a fermenting struggle to read the third paragraph of *Method* effectively: finding “the third way,” yes, and I repeat myself: the finding and the doing are both “difficult and laborious.”<sup>18</sup>

The grim tough fact is that we need community to do that, to find our way back into Lonergan’s screaming non-utopia<sup>19</sup> quite beyond the increasing immorality of the nominalistic tinkering that is present Lonerganism. Blunt? Extreme? I enjoy always recalling Fred Crowe’s remark in such a context as this. “This is rather bluntly said, I am afraid, but is there not room for a measure of bluntness at this stage?”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Might you not even be vocal at Lonergan conferences, or in classes? Beware, of course, of talking yourself out of a credit, a thesis, a job, or tenure.

<sup>17</sup> *Method in Theology*, 4.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> “Is my proposal utopian? It asks merely for creativity.” (“Healing and Creating in History,” quoted both in *A Third Collection*, p. 108 and in *CWL 15, Macroeconomic Dynamics*, 106).

<sup>20</sup> F. E. Crowe, “The Exigent Mind,” *Spirit as Inquiry: Studies in Honor of Bernard Lonergan S.J.* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), 27.

So the cry has to bubble up in and against a range of present Lonerganistic institutions,<sup>21</sup> such as the pattern of tinkering that has gone on for over forty years in the Boston College Workshop.<sup>22</sup>

This is a good annoying controversial spot in which to halt. Where am I halting? The footnotes point to a fuller context of the halt, the stand. But, discomfortingly, I stand between the lion's paws<sup>23</sup> at the end of page 250 of *Method*. Might Lawrence, Doran, Vertin, etc. etc.<sup>24</sup> join me there, tell me how their tinkering is to be effective in these next seven millennia? Surely they sense the catastrophic silliness of imagining that their horizon is coincident with the field? "The field is *the* universe, but my horizon defines *my* universe."<sup>25</sup> The field is the full finite realm in which, Gracefully, we must

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<sup>21</sup> We are in the minding heuristic of the spread of words on page 48 of *Method in Theology* that includes institutions. On my meaning of those spread of words see the Epilogue to *Seeding Global Collaboration*, ed. Patrick Brown (Vancouver: Axial Press, 2016) (forthcoming), "Embracing Luminously and Toweringly the Symphony of Cauling." This Epilogue is also available online at: "[Embracing Luminously and Toweringly the Symphony of Cauling.](#)"

<sup>22</sup> Other institutions of course are equally involved in dodging Lonergan's final creative surge. I mention Boston both it is the oldest such institution and still dominates the ethos of Lonerganism and also because I was in there at the founding shortly after the Florida Conference of 1970, where I had presented my view of functional collaboration in musicology. I was naively optimistic that the road was open to serious theoretical thinking and functional collaboration.

<sup>23</sup> "He's got the whole thing in his intellectual paws." *Phenomenology and Logic*, CWL 18, 357. This is a comment of Lonergan on competence, which I apply here to competence in those sixteen lines of *Method*, 250. The task of the exercise of the lines is to twirl incompetence out and away.

<sup>24</sup> I mention only three names, names of those to whom I have reached out openly in critical dialogue. See, in my website *Question and Answer Series*, Q/A 30: "[The Trinity in History](#)," reviewing Doran's work. Further, in my website book, [Lonergan's Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry](#), my main contentions are with Doran and Penrose. Also, in part three of the website book, [Method in Theology: Revisions and Implementations](#), I deal with Doran's handling of the systematics of the trinitarian "4-hypothesis." I reach out mainly to Lawrence in Q/A 36, "[An Appeal to Lawrence and Other Elders](#)." My challenge to Vertin is in "The Importance of Rescuing *Insight*," *The Importance of Insight: Essays in Honour of Michael Vertin*, edited by John Liptay and David Liptay, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 339-376.

<sup>25</sup> *Phenomenology and Logic*, CWL 18, 199.

“employ the utmost freedom of the imagination”<sup>26</sup> “distinguishing the successive stages of this, the greatest of all works.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> The Triune God: Systematics, CWL 12, 503.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 491.