

Posthumous 11

Allurexperiences

For some time now I have been focused on a textual source of what can be called *religious experience*. The focus was related to my struggle to bring forward elements of Lonergan's view of religion¹ and of the special foundational categories² needed to foster the global climb towards³ the related identity. The immediate source of that experience of mine was and is the section of *Insight*, chapter 20 that begins "In the thirteenth place" talking about "some type or species of charity" and spiraling on for over two pages to conclude that "good will wills the order of the universe, and so it wills with that order's dynamic joy and zeal."⁴

The meaning of 'bring forward' is complex with a complexity that is to emerge here and in later essays, but immediately I mention only Lonergan's aspiration of 1952 to have a larger volume following *Insight* that would deal with 'Insight and Faith.'⁵ My aspiration and task in these essays is to push towards some seeding of that "far larger"⁶ work that would have followed *Insight*, but in a way that would relate it to his efforts of twenty years later. The task and problem has been part of my searchings since 1966, when Lonergan spoke to me about the central problem of writing *Method in Theology*, the problem of the book presupposing *Insight*.⁷

¹ I restrict myself here to considering the fourth chapter of *Method in Theology*.

² See especially *Method in Theology*, 290 (line 29) - 291.

³ I think here not just of the pilgrimage but of the everlasting mysterious intimacy of incompleteness that I have touched on regularly in the past decade.

⁴ The text goes from the bottom of page 720 of *Insight* to the end of 722, "that order's dynamic joy and zeal," a phrase to which I have regularly drawn attention.

⁵ "Insight and Faith" was a suggested title for a second volume to follow *Insight* which Lonergan mentioned in a letter of July 23rd 1952 to Eric O'Connor. The letter is reproduced in Pierrot Lambert and Philip McShane, *Bernard Lonergan: His Life and Leading Ideas*, Axial Publications, 2010, 156.

⁶ *Insight*, 754, top line, where Lonergan refers to his incomplete work.

⁷ This was a topic of conversation in 1966, when he first presented me with the dynamics of functional collaboration. We were both living that summer in the Regis College of Bayview

By mid-November of 2012 I had reached the profound⁸ lift of my religious meaning that is expressed in the strange word that titles this essay, a word that I would now use to replace the title-word of Lonergan's fourth chapter of *Method*, "Religion." But before musing a little with you on the meaning of that strange word, let me touch, in a useful manner, on just one of the problems I had and have with that fourth chapter.

I invite you first to come with me to in a reading of page 105, followed through to the fourth line of the next page. It is a powerful expression of the invitation and the rising to the heights of human living. It sings, in the final line there, of our "proper fulfillment."

And now – you probably didn't follow the invitation of the previous paragraph! - I pose the question: how does this reading fit in with that other reading, "the thirteenth place", a reading which brings us, "yes, I said yes I will Yes"⁹ to a singing with the universe's "dynamic joy and zeal"?

Or should I not rather ask, how might 'it', the point, the message, have been said, or said differently, in that missing volume on Faith and Insight? Read the two pieces – indeed over days and decades – and grow in wonder at what I could risk calling "the Existential Gap"¹⁰: a gap in Lonergan's efforts, a gap in religious cultures, a gap in my self-appreciation and your own self-appreciation, a gap gaping groaningly in the mode described in the eighth chapter of the *Letter to the Romans* that Lonergan mentions on *Method* 103. Our wonder can¹¹ grow into an

Avenue. There were conversations in his room, but also there were more leisurely musing by the swimming pool, a feature of his slow climb to recovery from the 1965 lung removal.

⁸ Why the claim of *profound*? This is an issue and a claim that is to occupy us in many of the following essays: leads here are in notes 1,4,5,6 of *Posthumous* 10 and in note 11 of *Posthumous* 12.

⁹ These are the final words of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, ending Molly Bloom's soliloquy.

¹⁰ I add here the context of that topic as discussed in *Phenomenology and Logic*, CWL 18.

¹¹ The meaning of *can* here is enlarged on in *Posthumous* 10, notes 1,4,5,6 and in *Posthumous* 12, note 11.

ontic and phyletic heuristic of millennia to come. My little ramble here is just the turning of a sod in the seeding of that growth.¹²

Back now to the first reading, the reading from *Insight's* chapter 20, with a focus on what for us here is its central message, "the universe is in love with God and good will is in love with God."¹³ This is not talk of a flooding of the heart of *Romans* 5:5. It may be closer to cherishing "the flower in the crannied wall,"¹⁴ but my interest is in the fact that it reaches to the humdrum, answering with a **yes** Joyce's question, "am I walking into eternity on Sandymount strand?"¹⁵

Answering whom? Well, that is a trickier question that will concern us further in these Posthumous essays. But, be it a flower seen or a stride taken - if the seeing and taking is human - then it is a step in the love of God. The experience, in the old sense, or the subtler sense of Lonergan's fourth chapter, is a religious experience: and in my odd term, it is an allurexperience.

Have I jolted you into my puzzle, caught your attention? So, have I not given¹⁶ you a religious experience, indeed - with pun now on the edge of being, the inner being being in you, noted by you - drawn your tied-in attention, seeding a fresh luminosity, **to all ur experiences?**

My puzzle, my problem? The puzzle is the direction Lonergan took in writing of religious experience in this chapter of *Method in Theology*. Share now that puzzle

¹² I am recalling here the conclusion of the final chapter of Frederick Crowe's *Theology of the Christian Word. A Study of History*, Paulist Press, 1978: "When you have a mountain to move, and only a spade and wheelbarrow to work with, you can either sit on your hands or you can put spade to earth and move the first sod" (*Op. cit.* 149) .

¹³ *Insight* 721, lines 8-9.

¹⁴ I reference here Lonergan's reflections on the "excellence that may pertain to an object in itself" in *For a New Political Economy*, 30-31. The full poem of Tennyson he implicitly refers to is given in note 1 of page 31.

¹⁵ I quote from the beginning of chapter 3 of James Joyce's *Ulysses*.

¹⁶ The **giving**, of course, is merely **dispositive**, in the full theological technicality of that word. But the giving is strangely always in its full context, the **calling field** (See *Phenomenology and Logic*, the index under *Field*). See also note 1 of *Posthumous* 12.

with me, religiously. The deeper problem is the problem of discernment that I have just raised implicitly in talking of religious sharing. The larger deeper problem that I am raising, waving on the ocean-surface of your consciousness, is the task of human history that is the discernment of discernments of discernments of our journey, our authenticity, our progress to “destiny.”¹⁷

But now, instead of pursuing any of these vast ontic and phyletic issues I spiral that last paragraph roundtowerwise¹⁸ to reach for a restructuring of that fourth chapter of *Method in Theology*.

How, then, are we, allured, to name and aim progress in our ontic and phyletic weaving towards everlasting circumincessional Mystery?

A first step forward is for someone here and there in the story to notice freshly the clasp and call that is our cherishing within, within history, within our molecules, within our *moi intime* or our breathing of OM.¹⁹

A second step would be a sharing of the freshness, an asking of companions, “Am I out of my mind, or indeed in my mind?”

And the third step is obvious: we ask about about about²⁰ the source and our meaning of the source. I was looking at the moon rising over the water and fell on my knees. But is the moon a god, a residence of an Unknown Friendliness?

¹⁷ The word ends the second paragraph of *Method in Theology* 292, and adds the relevant tone of global destiny which the second canon of hermeneutics (*Insight* 609-10) is to sustain.

¹⁸ This is the dominant image of my present writings. It lifts **W₃** into a fuller sense of the challenge of both spiral climbing and communicating with plain plane meaning.

¹⁹ On the modernly revealed layers from the *moi intime* to refused givenness see *Insight* 495. Om, the cherishing noise of being at Om in transcendental method (*Method in Theology*, 14), calls us back to and forward from the integral consciousness of the *Upanishads*.

²⁰ The strange repetition, or its equivalent, “(about)³”, may by now be familiar. It points to a remote culture of luminous self-possession, in which how-language (**HOW: Home Of Wonder**) emerges.

I heard the voice of Jesus in a dreamlike prayer, but was it him or was it my yearning molecules?

And if we discerningly sense truth, then there emerges a fourth step, concern about discerning genuine content, core authenticity.

So we arrive at a fuller cherishing, a fifth step of relocating ourselves subtly and gently in our story.

Have I not raised molecular bundles of existential questions for our posthumous weaving?

And, more immediately, have I not hit on a strategy of reorganizing the discussion of chapter 4 of *Method* into five sections?²¹

But first, muse over those five steps, five sections – is it not astonishing you, alluring you? - named in that later foundational part of *Method in Theology*. To that we turn in *Posthumous* 12, “Clasping, Cherishing, Calling, Craving, Christing” and *Posthumous* 13, “Rewriting *Method* chapter 4, “Religion.”²²

²¹ *Method in Theology*, 290-91.

²² *Posthumous* 13 is to be a beginning, a new beginning, another effort of mine –surely the final! – to turn the study of Lonergan towards the full global lift of religious meaning that was his dream. The beginning will climb, in 2013, through nine *Posthumous* essays to *Posthumous* 21, echoing in that 21st essay the message of *CWL* 21, placing the extraordinary reach of the first three chapters of *For a New Political Economy* in a fresh context. But I would wish not to be alone in that final effort, an effort to rewrite *Method*’s chapter titled “Religion,” but really an effort to move towards a communal climb into the ethos of the missing – “far larger than *Insight*” - second volume named by Lonergan in 1952 “*Insight and Faith*.” So I would welcome discussion, suggestions and questions in the Q/A section on my Website: <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/qa-01.html>. Personal efforts at this task, of course, can become contributions to participating in the 1833 Overture. And recall the question posed in note 5 of *Posthumous* 10: you might well restrict your effort to contributing an articulation of your struggle towards your own meaning of the phrase “being in love with God.”