

## Prehumous 12

### Functional History and Global Collaboration

#### Preface

This essay concludes the Prehumous series, indeed abruptly. In the first part I return once again to the topic of functional history, locating the novel<sup>1</sup> view of the ineffable light in us within that context in a creative open way. It points to possibilities of new levels of human rapture, within the creative minority but also within everyday bones. The heart of this series is its attention to foundational prayer, but the heart of the matter and molecules is a transformation of ordinary prayer quite beyond present fantasy.<sup>2</sup>

Part 2 here is my abrupt ending.

#### 1. Functional History.

First, obviously functional history has characteristics that it - the group of historians involved - shares with the other specialized groupings. This is best grasped through analogy with successful simpler sciences, but evidently there is no serious grasp without entry into such science.

But one may move forward with description of scientific process, all the more

---

<sup>1</sup>See the text at note 9 below. The shift to natural ineffability relates to paradoxes of the the extravagant desires that are humans, oddities of the lightsome exigences of evolution. See *Phenomenology and Logic*, the index under *Exigence*.

<sup>2</sup>At one stage in these past months I envisaged an *Assembly* (the last word on page 249 of *Method*) that could blossom into fantasy within the task of 27 lines later. It would have to reach back through the Psalms and forward, e.g. through the 13<sup>th</sup> century of Dogen and Rumi and the Beguine ladies, to the present day popular guides to transcendence. Such guides range from the sophistications of William Johnston's *Zen* reaching to *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Spirituality*, but there is a common failure to focus - putting it popularly but accurately - on **What's what?** An odd parallel may help here: read note 21 below, not with "the whole problem of the end of marriage" in mind, but with a fantasy about the whole problem of the end of prayer.

securely when it is appreciated descriptively as such. So, we may consider the group of chemist working with some sophisticated version of the structure discovered and implemented in the early 1870s. Let us call this the contemporary Standard Model in chemistry: in symbols,  $SM_{\text{now}}$ , which for the moment we shall call the core.  $SM_{\text{now}}$  defines the group existentially and operatively. By 1880 the group was thus well-defined, and this is revealed by a study of the journals of chemistry during the period 1860-1890. That study, when pursued in detail, reveals a sequence of models,  $SM_{1860}$  etc, but with a break that can be identified with Mendeleev's presentation to the Second Congress of Russian Naturalists, in August 1869, of the paper "The Atomic Volumes of the Simple Bodies", which contained a periodic table in its modern form.

Certainly, amateur misdirected chemical investigations remained, and are still an occurrence. There are, however, no serious traditions associated with them, such as, for example, the Flat Earth society in physics or Creationism in theology.<sup>3</sup> This simplifies the full standard model considerably. But have we not already designated the standard model? You notice that above we talked of *core*. This carries us forward toward the question of the full model, the full heuristic, one which attends to the concrete activity of doing chemistry within a national or local culture. A full model must take into its account the occurrence of eccentrics in chemistry departments, in industry, whatever.

What is that full model? We had best approach this issue slowly, in convenient stages. A first key point to take note of the group as closed, so to speak, round the present core standard model. There is a penumbra of "beyond the fringe" expectations present in the group: the core is not closed, but is more like the biological cell with its varieties of permeabilities. The fringe may ferment forwards to a genetic shift in the core model. In the case of chemistry, indeed, there is little fringe expectation at present,

---

<sup>3</sup>I have discussed in previous essays, e.g. *Prehumous II*, the need to restrict dialogue with other models of searching to very definite functional specialties. I must skip the topic here. But it should be obvious that the new data I bring in later, data on the nature of the light of intelligence, is not a topic seriously shared by any other school of investigation.

the door is not locked, but pretty firmly shut.

From our small foray into chemistry we discover the obvious: that it is a study with a story. The study presents itself mainly as a sequence of models, the story mainly as a linking of those models. One may legitimately go on to ask about the function of the study and about the function of the story. Indeed, again, we are in the realm of the obvious. In the broadest terms, the study gives us an advantage over nature, and somehow the story gives us an advantage over each study in the sequence. Prior to thinking of advantage, of course, one might say that that is just the way it is, the way of human interest. But speaking thus is speaking in an abstractive vein, perhaps one might say it is speaking in a world of *haute vulgarization* and thus out of touch with the realities of human interest.<sup>4</sup> In the concrete the issue is advantage, and study and story reveal whether we - leaving the precise meaning of *we* aside for the moment - are on the right track.

But we must stay in the concrete and ask about such revelations. The asking can be enlighteningly colored by considering the effectiveness of the historian of chemistry. What, we ask, happens to the revelations of the scientists and the historians? If they are adverted to at all by community decision-makers, the adverting is usually selective and partisan. But few would deny that the revelations are likely to be relevant.

A further move is to ask, In what way are they relevant? Fairly easily and almost immediately we can say that they are relevant in so far as they tell how the story of chemistry not only is moving forward but is made to so move forward. It is important to note how the meaning, the operating meaning, of *forward* is unavoidably present. It has its psychological presence within the historians, a broadly shared presence with personal variations. A generally acceptable view of that presence is that there is an interest in "what is happening in chemistry?"<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup>See Lonergan, *Collected Works*, vol. 6, 121, 155.

<sup>5</sup>One may recall von Ranke, but note the psychological shift to *Praxisweltanschauung*..

But also present is the psychological fact of the value of finding out. There is a human interest in where chemistry is going; in terms introduced above, the group are “caught up in” the assumed genetics of  $SM_{\text{now}}$ .

Functional history is history in which that “caught up in” is sufficiently luminous as to become “cycled forward in”, but also sufficiently luminous to stay on its task, or at least to differentiate the task of fact finding from policy-making.

The nature of luminosity requires such further attention as would mediate sufficient precisions of the enterprise of history to guarantee its efficiency. Again, this is not a major shift. No one expects the historian of chemistry to do chemistry. The historian begins with the chemistry already done and documented. What is meant by chemistry done certainly presents another problem, but let us leave that vague for the present: its determination will make more definite the range of the relevant documentation.<sup>6</sup> The historian, one might image, is balanced between the range of diaries of the endeavors of chemistry and the policies of later chemical endeavors.

We have come, with a strange effortlessness, to a view of history as functional. It is a view that fits the image of a three-stage process, or indeed, a three-person relay race. The historian runs the second leg. Science provides a core of data; historians make the genetics of that provision available; decision makers act efficiently on that genetic retrieval. It does not take genius to notice that the third leg is bristling with problems, but that is beside the present point.

The present point relates to the concrete realistic function of the story of events in what we consider our modern advance culture. Still, one might say here, “get real”. The function of story - and think here of German history or Jewish or Irish or Chinese history - is very much as Lonergan talks of pre-critical history: it is bent towards the pre-critical aspiration of apology and prophecy.

---

<sup>6</sup>This brings in the question of total history, the slopes talked of in *Method in Theology: Revisions and Implementations*. It may also bring to mind the comments on documents in *The Sketch of Insight* chapter 17.

What are we to say to this? Let us go back to his earlier reflection on diary and autobiography. Throw in the help of a therapist who, at best, is a certain type of informed historian. The patient, say, brings the diaries, supplementing them with rambling memories. Both the diaries and the memories, we rightly assume, are critically sifted by the therapist. And do we not also rightly assume that the therapist, if genuine, is not bent on a low-grade unethical and pseudo-explanatory apology for the life lived, coupled with a prophecy about further carry-on in the same pattern? Might we not say that pre-critical history is as passe as the traveling health-vendors of the 19<sup>th</sup> century?

But there is a twist to be added, added perhaps slowly in the cycles of collaboration that are to give rise, in a hundred years or so, to a standard model of functional collaboration. The twist is the rescuing of pre-critical history's aspirations. One might be helped here by analogies with Proffoff's therapeutic emphasis on missed, dodged, screened: such omissions can, of course, be identified as ranging from malicious exclusions to radical truncated screenings. But let us envisage the functional historian, indeed the functional Christian historian, who shares, with a measure of age and talent, the perspective on perspectivism that is the inner word of Lonergan's 1970s position. Within that inner word there is, for example, the perspective of 1953, expressed in the last few pages of section 9, chapter 19, of *Insight*. "Error becomes a deviation not only from truth but also from God, and wrong-doing takes on the character of sin against God."<sup>7</sup>

It seems best to illustrate by homing in on a piece of history: the holocaust and its functional history. How is it to be written by the Christian historian, XH, and how is it to be read?

XH recounts what is going forward with all the facticity possible through, say, an appreciation of the dynamics of Thomas' *Prima Secundae*, qq.6-17. Acts of inferior or erroneous planning and faulty willing are facts that breed the panoply of secondary

---

<sup>7</sup>*Insight*, 666[689].

determinations of the flow of events. Such a meaning is made present in XH's minding and presented to readers who are presumed, in the cycling, to share the comeabout context, "an audience that similarly grasps the universal viewpoint"<sup>8</sup> The context presupposes an already shared meaning of what may be expressed multipotently as **Groups of people were shipped from their homes, packed unfed in rail-carriages. At the destination, some were killed, others, fitter, were used to work to the limit of their capacity and even their lives, for the German effort.** But the creative Christian historian is concerned with anomalies, fresh hints of historical reality fetched up from research interpreted. So, for instance, research can throw up an anomaly that is the creative identification of a phrase in Lonergan's writings: "What is ineffable in us, what our life is the expression of, is the light in which all knowledge is imparted to us, the light by which we naturally desire to know being, and therefore to know God by his essence."<sup>9</sup>

The creative identification is followed by a creative contextualizing interpretation. Might the throw-up change the meaning of written history? Perpetrators and persecuted are freshly identified, and with them all others, writer and reader and "each member, each group, indeed our whole host and its great pilgrimage .... the eternal strivings of the human spirit towards ... Home"<sup>10</sup> The functional historian picks up on this, is picked up by this, a fresh glimpse of selves in history, and the horror is magnified, the mystery uplifted.<sup>11</sup>

Horror and mystery? Are these part of functional history, its inner word, its

---

<sup>8</sup>*Insight*, 580[602].

<sup>9</sup>The reference here is to page 65 of Charles Hefling's unpublished translation, *The Incarnate Word*, of Lonergan's *De Verbo Incarnato*. It is in the section titled "The argument: apart 6" under subsection 8, "the unity of human consciousness".

<sup>10</sup>Herman Hesse, *The Journey to the East*, London, 1970, 12.

<sup>11</sup>One should add the context of *Understanding and Being*, 374-77.

cherishing, its incarnation? In mature functional history, that has already been determined in previous cycles, by the completing efforts of the dialectic community, mentioned now even though it has not been an explicit topic in this essay. That is the shared meaning mentioned above, a shared meaning of the boldfaced words above. Are you reading, have you read, those words in resonance with the that future functional historian? The question is posed existentially now: only in the next section shall we attempt to specify the fuller resonance. So, you might turn to your own minding of the minding expressed in the phrase “packed unfed in rail-carriages”. *Packed* refers to an aggregated sequence of choices with regard to the chosen people. *Packed* refers to networks of errors and sequences of deviations from intelligent minding. In so far as writer and reader have grasped both the nature of human error and of deviance from the rhythms of adequate decision-making, *packed* is packed with fault-finding.

How packed? We must return to that large question in the next section. Here the issue is elementary discovery and clarity on “what is going on”, proximately, in the packing. That elementary discovery is simply expressed in the claim that the historian determines the facts of being, including the facts that are defective being. The simple expression is multipotent in meaning, but the meaning in my mind here is the meaning of the facts as they are controlled by the Standard Model, about which we have been quite vague, about which we hope to be less vague in the following section. But the aim is, and the aim of this stumbling essay is, to shift that “less vague” of you and me into a “systematic clarity” in a generation or three of the functional striving of Christian historians who take Lonergan’s suggestions seriously.

Let us suppose that the system has emerged and is in control in the minders of the functional cycle. In that context of fantasy, we may pause fruitfully over the two phrases “packed unfed in rail-carriages” and “what is ineffable in us is the light”. We assume that the community of functional historians have a common and massively remote meaning for the first phrase. What of the second phrase?

The question can lead us forward marvellously in conceiving of the working the

cycle of functionality. The second phrase is there, among Lonergan's writings. Some researcher or researchers notice it, say, when the 1964 Latin treatise of Lonergan emerges in 2011 as *The Incarnate Word*. Those with even a popular notion of present physics can be helped here by musing over a parallel with the new Large Hadron Collider in its relation to the Higgs particle.<sup>12</sup>

We are looking for a nudge, an anomalous data-complexed nudge, to and within the Standard Model. In our case, we<sup>13</sup> are open to noticing or even looking for a nudge on our Standard-Model meaning of natural and supernatural finite being.

The phrase "what is ineffable in us is the light" is noticed, and it is noticed as anomalous. The researchers within the standard model have lived with the distinction that emerged in the Model in the early thirteenth century - there is nature and there is supernature - and that living has generated a sequence of refinements - so, there is a tripolar aspect to the human dialectic within a supernatural history.<sup>14</sup> But this data-complex surrounding the word "ineffable" is a Higgs Particle problem in our standard model. Is human nature ineffable at its core and how might a positive reply shake up our model of historical being?

Our interest here, a fantasy towards later tower concern, is not in following up that particular question in content but in method. The anomaly is - or may be - lifted up through, for example, a refinement of a relatively-accepted interpretation of Lonergan. There is a more or less likely handing on of the cyclic baton through the conversations symbolized by  $C_{23}$ . An aggregate of waves of astonishment, interest, resentment, can flow through the entire community of Christian historians. Some few would bring their astonishment into focus in zones familiar to them: Johannine studies, medieval searchings, a century of existentialist theology. There is, indeed, the possibility of the

---

<sup>12</sup>See *Scientific American*, February 2008.

<sup>13</sup>As mentioned already, a later topic.

<sup>14</sup>*Insight*, 728[749].



full lift of the model into a fresh genetically and dialectically structured heuristic of history.

And then there emerges the likelihood of the freshness having sufficient realistic backing to find its way into *assembly*. Will it be cherished, embraced, spoken into the future and the future cycling in waves of divergent series of conditions of better living?

The two-sentence paragraph points to the massive problem of implementing the strategies of page 250 of *Method* in a manner that should slowly reveal the astonishing meaning of the page. But that is not our present focus. Our present focus is on getting a simple perspective on the conversations  $C_{34}$ . The handing on of horror by the historians to the dialectic is a given of the established cycle. What is re-cycled, within that unchanged standard model, is the success or failure of the cycle through Dialect to Communications that aims at the beauty of efficiently<sup>15</sup> excluding the like future horror. Certainly, the recycling will include normal, but ecstatic, shifts in standard model research, interpretation, etc. But we have thrown in an illustration of abnormal, anomalous, shifting in order to nourish our fantasy regarding the concrete future operation of a well-established “normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results,”<sup>16</sup> that could remain relatively invariant over the next 2 billion years.

## 2. We, THEN, of the Tower of Able

After a good deal of puzzling I was inspired to turn this final communication into a non-communication. Or, I should say, avoiding this being an erudite non-communication by simply turning towards some anecdotal rambles that are the shadow of a page 250, *Method in Theology*, discomfiting endlines-challenge to be “at pains not

---

<sup>15</sup>The context to be developed is that of *Topics in Education*, 160, line 16.

<sup>16</sup>*Method in Theology*, 4.

to conceal my tracks,”<sup>17</sup> indeed to invite you to discern whether you might track the same way, or get the next generation to do it.

The **we** in 2011 will be some few Christian thinkers, thus praying Christian, who have a strange stamina for the long haul and the luck and time to climb. The **we** of 2111 is to be, if the first **we** succeeds or perhaps, sadly and courageously, independent of it, those that ask who we are in any zone of inquiry. The dates here? They relate to my last book regarding the standard model, *Loneragan's Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry*. And it was a follow-up on the more elementary book, *Method in Theology: Revisions and Implementations*. And that book was a follow-up on the strange million-word project of 117 monthly essays (2002-2011), *Cantowers*, which followed up on *Lack in the Beingstalk*. *A Giants Causeway*, (Axial Press, 2007, but written at the beginning of the millennium). All the way UP I was dealing with, developing, the Standard Model.

But let me get to my inspiration about twisting this into a better briefer communication. Better than what? A parallel was the nudge: the parallel with reflection on the Standard Model of physics in that article I referred to above. Here you have the relevant piece of the text:

“What physicists call the “Standard Model” of particle physics, to indicate that it is still a work in progress, can explain much about the known world. The main elements of the Standard Model fell into place during the heady days of the 1970s and 1980s, when waves of landmark experimental discoveries engaged emerging theoretical ideas in productive conversation. Many particle physicists look on the past 15 years as an era of consolidation in contrast to the ferment of earlier decades. Yet even as the Standard Model has gained ever more experimental support, a growing list of phenomena lies outside its purview, and new theoretical ideas have expanded our conception of what a richer and more comprehensive worldview would look like. Taken together, the

---

<sup>17</sup>I lift here a comment on historians (*Method in Theology*, 193), suitably misquoted, into this endrun of Dialectic.

continuous progress in experiment and theory point to a very lively decade ahead.”<sup>18</sup>

The piece threw me back to my first conversation with Lonergan in 1961 and to my last conversation, in 2001, with my graduate colleague of the late 1950s, Lochlainn O’Raifeartaigh. Both conversations were about a standard model, one in methodology, one in physics. Lochlainn had gone on, after our time together in the mid-1950s, to become a master of the Standard Model, taking his place in the Dublin Institute of Theoretical Physics where Schroedinger worked before him, and writing wrote two magnificent books on the Standard Model, one genetico-dialectic, the other systematic.<sup>19</sup> They are incomprehensible to the uninitiated. Nothing of them, or of the serious meaning of the Standard Model, comes across in *Scientific American*. What, indeed, does come across in *Scientific American*?

Yes, I could parallel the piece of that text, talk of the solitary climb of Lonergan to his standard model, and to a claim that, unlike the physics situation, the situation in methodology and theology just did not permit a start on, much less a blossoming of, the new Standard Model. There were few productive conversations, few serious “experimental discoveries” in the decades after *Insight*, and *Method* has been a shrunken non-enterprise from the get go. One cannot, then, claim that “taken together, the continuing progress in experiment and theory point to a very lively decade ahead.” And yet one can sadly note that there has been no growing list of phenomena outside the purview of Lonergan’s model, no richer or more comprehensive worldview.

Still, I would like to expect a sad liveliness of the decade ahead. I would like to expect, from this coming summer of 2008, a lift in the hearts of a few, “a not numerous

---

<sup>18</sup>Chris Quigg, “The Coming Revolution in Particle Physics”, *Scientific American*, February 2008, 46.

<sup>19</sup>Lochlainn O’Raifeartaigh, *Group Structure of Gauge Theory*, Cambridge University Press, 1986, and *The Dawning of Gauge Theory*, Princeton University Press, 1997. I place these in the context of the methodological problems of modern physics in “Elevating Insight: Space-time as Paradigm Problem” *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies*, **19** (2001)

center, big enough ... to work out the transitions to be made”<sup>20</sup> in theory, transitions grounded in fresh humble self-experiments and in a theoretic of self-discernment. Are we to remain “big frogs in little ponds”, as Lonergan remarked that Easter week of 1961? In his first lecture of the week, he talked of the lady asking Einstein to put his stuff into “her own simple words, without the equations.”<sup>21</sup> Perhaps she represents the readership of *Scientific American*? Certainly, she gives the mood of the many men who have misread Lonergan in the past fifty years, amazingly belittling genius.

Instead of owned simple words I noise forth, from my empirical residence,<sup>22</sup> an invitation to disowning hours and years of contemplation, of dwelling in the explanatory Word.<sup>23</sup>

A snow-bound evening of 2001 in Cape Breton, forty years after that week with Lonergan, led me to attempt the rescue operation that was the *Cantowers*. I abandoned that climb after 400,000 words - which stands now as an unsimple open invitation<sup>24</sup> -

---

<sup>20</sup>B.Lonergan, “Dimensions of Meaning”, *Collection*, 243.

<sup>21</sup>There was always that pressure on Lonergan, warping his lectures and his responses towards *haute vulgarization*. To many of his questioners he might well have said something equivalent to what he wrote to a correspondent in *The Canadian Register* (20 June 1942: see *Collected Works*, vol. 20, 308). “Now your correspondent will not find this any more satisfactory than my previous letter. What he wants is a treatise on the whole problem of the end of marriage. What he does not realize is that such a treatise would require at least two or three years’ work and, when it was written, would not be accepted for publication in *The Canadian Register*.”

<sup>22</sup>The title of *Cantower XXXII*; the mood is anticipated in *Cantower XXI*, “The Epilogue”, a Cantower which corresponds to the Epilogue of *Insight*.

<sup>23</sup>See *The Triune God: Systematics*, the top of page 513. The “disowning” is related to the “repentance” of *Insight* 700[722] with its drive towards an embodied resonance with the zeal of the Big Bang (*Ibid.*, end lines).

<sup>24</sup>A list of the entire project, a ten-volume work to have been entitled *Roun Doll, Home James*, is contained in *Cantower XXIV*. The six missing volumes are not really missing. The material is covered heuristically and sketchily in the various series that emerged as well, of course, in the two books, *Method in Theology: Revisions and Implementations* and *Lonergan’s Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry*.

because of the promise of collaboration, one that in fact failed but rather became a solitary climb, within the single page 250 of *Method*, a climb of more than a year and more than 200 pages.<sup>25</sup> Other possibilities of collaboration followed, again, unsuccessful, but generating the odd sequences of *Joistings* and *Eldorede* and this *Prehumous* sequence. Collaboration did not take shape but some few have noticed the desperate need, in their hearts, for an adult growth<sup>26</sup> in contemplation, in *theoria*, foreign to our times. But in the main we are not much further than we were when Lonergan wrote in 1942 of “a beast with a three-ton body and a ten-ounce brain”<sup>27</sup> and asked, in his lonesomeness, that the minding community “lift its eyes more and ever more” to the difficult fields of minding, so as to generate “the delicate compound of unity and freedom in which alone progress can be born, struggle, and win through”.

There will, of course, not be a *Posthumous* sequence, but might there be a *Humus* sequence, coming not from me but from those few up, up, to a fresh start, then, THEN?<sup>28</sup> It must be humic and humble, earthy in its experiments in ineffable light’s kneeling molecules. It must be a many-layered sublation of the muscular longing of the mythic Greek wrestler, *Antaeus*, but now primarily *Antaea*, invincible as long as cyclically grounded in mother earth’s loneliness. The loneliness is to be the cosmic and kataphatic reaching of the Tower that spirals up yet radiates round and beyond, in coming millennia, through the global lonely riverrun, reverie,<sup>29</sup> prayer, of every HCE and ALP.

---

<sup>25</sup>I refer to the two sequences, *SOFDAWARE* and *Quodlibets*.

<sup>26</sup>A regular topic of mine in these past years. See e.g. the Concluding section of *Lack in the Beingstalk*.

<sup>27</sup>*For a New Political Economy*, 20.

<sup>28</sup>**Cantower V**, “Metaphysics THEN”, introduced the notion of a sublation of Zen and Ken thinking into a THEN or **Ven** heuristic.

<sup>29</sup>“Reverierun” is the title of section 12 of my essay “The Importance of Rescuing Insight”, in *The Importance of Insight: Essay in Honour of Michael Vertin*, University of Toronto Press, 2007. The section, and the essay, provide a context for reflection on the contribution of

---

retiring Lonergan scholars to the challenge I pose here. HCE (here comes everyone!) And ALP are, you may know, James Joyce's pointers of *Finnegans Wake* to the lady and the man in the street.