

Q. 46 (May 10th) The longer cycle involves “the disregard of timely and fruitful ideas” (*Insight*, 254) and later Lonergan remarks that “cosmopolis is concerned to make operative the timely and fruitful ideas that otherwise are inoperative” (*Insight*, 264). He does not enlarge on that in *Insight* but rather repeats the general demand e.g. in the Epilogue. Would you please throw some light on how the “concern to make operative” is to become effective as functional collaboration gets going?

A. 46 The question, like most others here, demands a spectrum of creative efforts, and it seems useful to point to one creative piece of the structure that is to emerge, the piece that I would identify as the **disciplinary convergence** of FS₁ to FS₄ that very, very gradually is to appear¹ and the **divergence to locations, situations**, that is to take place in the flows of FS₅ to FS₈ and their output C₉, which of course generates further input to FS₁.²

But I would wish you to lift the question out of conventional thinking, in a manner continuous with the effort of the two previous questions: take it out of the library, out of the classroom, out of the world of what I cheerfully called the mole-asses in A. 45,³ and go walk-about, as I did in Dublin or in New York or now in Vancouver,⁴ etc. etc.: as I do regularly – and depressingly!⁵

¹ See the text at note 13 below. What haunts me here is the image, presented in Dublin by Lonergan during Easter week of 1961, of Einstein being asked to spell out, in simple words, his view of spacetime. An additional memory is worth adding. I spent a good deal of energy in 1956 on Schrödinger’s magnificent book, *Space-Time Structure*. In 1957 I met with Lonergan’s treatment of Space-Time (*Insight*, chapter 5): I found it thoroughly incomprehensible despite my education in General Relativity. Yet the disciplinary convergence that I mentioned requires some grip on that “bridge” (*Insight*, 163) and its mediation of “The Concrete Intelligibility of Space and Time” (the last section in *Insight* chapter 5). Thinking of his Dublin story of a decade later than the writing of that chapter one surely must grin at the beginning of his final paragraph there: “The answer is easily reached” (*Insight*, 195). In his solitary typing of the early 1950s Lonergan was leaping alone, Gulliver travelling.

² The Tower image on page 163 of *Bernard Lonergan: His Life and Leading Ideas* helps here.

³ Mole-asses? Molasses of course is that thick stuff that would certainly hamper your stride. But there is a fantasy of the future in the climb towards ridding us of the burden of pre-science that sticks to our steps from the past in the presence and presentings of moles, (yes, spy is a meaning, but recall also the Latin *mola* meaning millstone with an Indoeuropean root meaning of crushing). First, when one shouts out – FS₅ to FS₈ – regarding and guarding the field one is alone (see note 17 below). Secondly, the moles of the past need sifting in the slowly-growing incarnated light of W₃: some bright ideas are messily muddled by myth (back again to that Indoeuropean root, and forwards to the haunting *melody* of *Insight* chapter 17, mentioned below in note 7, on the opposition of myth to mystery.) At all events, the fantasy of the future is a strenuous neuromolecular exercise but deeply necessary if we are not to drag our molar asses into the future.

⁴ See note 8 below.

⁵ I think here of my reflections on the stupidities and cupidities that surround the provincial management of Canadian water with the depression caught nicely in the ambiguity of its title’s first word, “Eau Canada. Global Water Collaboration,” *Field Nocturne Cantower* 45 (available at:

I pause for a long period to figure out what I might helpfully say without getting into writing a book: writing the book is the task of the next generations but only in the light of serious empirical cycling efforts in these coming years. Perhaps that is one point worth your pausing over in asking what you mean, what you might mean, by “timely and fruitful ideas that otherwise are inoperative.” I really mean pausing, “taking your eyes off the page,”⁶ as Bachelard suggested. In my terms, go walk-about: see and seize the street-problem that haunted Lonergan as he walked with Wordsworth⁷ in that first section of *Insight* chapter 17. Perhaps carry with you, in your local or global slum-walk, the timely and fruitful idea of feeding and housing the poor.⁸ Link up that idea and that walking with my twisting of *Method*’s present

<http://www.philipmcshane.ca/FNC-45.pdf>). Just one more instance of the desperate need for functional collaboration.

⁶ I am recalling Gaston Bachelard’s marvelous little book *The Poetics of Space* (Beacon Press, 1970) on reading a house, a nest, ... (ibid., 14, 39, 47, 83). Think now of the reading of any zone of space-time yielding “timely and fruitful ideas.” Think of this sacramental moment!

⁷ See *Insight*, 556. Might the world “take on glory and the freshness of a dream” (ibid.)? Might I get you now, THEN, to read this first section of *Insight* chapter 17 freshly as a longing to see the global village as radiantly “Domus Tua” (the title of a four-line poem by Francis Thompson, about a woman ... but also (about)³ a man, a woman or man in the mirror, or (about)³ the slimmest bright idea): “A perfect woman – Thine be laud! / Her body is a Temple of God / At Doom-bar dare I make avows: / I have loved the beauty of Thy house.”

⁸ One has to move from the old meaning of *general* that drops off particulars and indeed their essences to a new meaning of general that is poised in **W**₃ (see *Bernard Lonergan. His Life and Leading Ideas*, 242ff, on “General History”). It helps to share with you a present instance of my walk-about, in Vancouver. My wife co-leads a ministry in First United Church, “a bastion of hope in Vancouver’s gritty Downtown Eastside” (Bob Burrows, *Hope Lives Here. A History of Vancouver’s First United Church*, British Columbia: Harbour Publishing, 2010, 9). Present pressures from surrounding businesses and government are towards gentrification (as it is called) of the area. What fruitful ideas are to prevail? My wife and her co-leader, Steven Gray, hold firm in defense of the shabby old grey building. Not your problem, but ours. Your problem? No doubt there are similar zoning problems. But I note that there is the old grey building of Lonergan, made white and pale by *Collected Works*. Is Lonergan being gentrified by the company of moles? Are you looking for a sanctuary? “When doughty Scots pioneers founded a Presbyterian church in the seaside hamlet of Granville 125 years ago, they longed for a sanctuary, a place of order, familiarity and dignity in the midst of the brawling, virtually lawless, boom-or-bust society around them.” *Op. cit.*, 9. Can we break forwards to sanctuary? First United has its strange welcome with beds and food for the poor and the addicts in its chapel. It does not resemble the Sistine Chapel. Is there some set of fruitful ideas in First United that might rise to F₄ and descend to F₈, reaching out to 10,000 villages? And then we may ask locally, *locoly*: Is there a set of fruitful ideas in the shabbily-built *Method* that might disturb “the boom-and-bust society around”? The question that should haunt us all in our walk-about is “who is running this street?” And if we ask that question in the blooming mood of **apt**, Apting’s heart-hold, then the street, within Thought on Method, is seized as the divinely cherished incarnate longing for circumincessional oneness, and we reach, in explanatory convergence and divergence, to see the street as “something better than was the reality.” *Method in Theology*, 251. By the way, when you come to Vancouver next year for the Bastille Day revolution in

meaning through tying those ten words together with new meaning: “Thought on method is apt⁹ ... the possible expression is collaboration.”¹⁰

Obviously I am asking you to creep¹¹ in mind what I wrote in the previous two answers around the final sentence of *Method*: “while we wait for cognitive agreement, the possible expression is collaboration in fulfilling the redemptive and constructive roles of the Christian church in human society.”¹²

But what about the convergence and divergence involved in that collaboration that is to make it effective, turning swords to ploughs? Well, you could start by musing over my month-long climb of October 2002 to arrive at the meaning of the convergence-slope in the diagram on page 13 of *Cantower 8*, “Slopes: An Encounter.”¹³ But now you have to creep your neuromolecules to think beyond disciplines to bright ideas of decent trade and talk and traffic. Such ideas can emerge in any village, such as the village of Granville 130 years ago or here now, THEN. Functional disciplinary labour can lift its fresh meaning into foundational glory, so that that fresh meaning is slowly and effectively nurtured, by Cosmopolis’ divergent structures, in the 10,000 villages of India, and maybe even in the Vatican village church.

Now tell me, tell your creeping self,¹⁴ did you expect me “O to tell me all about Anna Livia! I want to hear all”¹⁵ to tell you seriously about the graduate¹⁶ content of the new science of

Lonergan studies, you will be welcomed by Rev. Sally and me to the street of First United, giving realism to the roosting in the University of British Columbia Campus.

⁹ See the beginning of chapter one of *Method*, page 3. We are asked, then, THEN, (*Cantower 5* of 2002 [available at: <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/cantower5.pdf>] has the title “Metaphysics THEN” with the lead in from Samuel Beckett’s last poem, “go where never before / no sooner there than there always”) to travel the seven seas in the ethos of the five Cs.

¹⁰ A piece of the final sentence on page 368 of *Method*, eventually – when you’ve beatled to 64 – to be read through your rich incarnate meaning (*Method*, 73) of the 365 pages between 3 and 368: a page a day for each year before that birthday ... or before an 84th birthday!

¹¹ Swedish, *krypa*, related to the Indo-European for twist, turn. Make your crippled flesh creep homeward.

¹² *Method in Theology*, 368.

¹³ The *Cantower* (available at: <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/cantower8.pdf>) appeared on the website on November 1st 2002: regularly a *Cantower* was the work of the previous month. I had the advantage, of course, of being in retirement!

¹⁴ The creeping is related not to your stupidity but to your humanity. Think of Schrödinger trying to explain his particular-reaching equation to the genius of the non-particularized Maxwell equations? Think, further, of Lonergan explaining this new non-foundational postmodern particularizing science to Thomas, the genius of the axiomatic *Summa*.

¹⁵ I quote the beginning of the famous river-talk of *Finnegans Wake*: page 196.

¹⁶ Graduate? This is an attitude and ethos that, I fear, is quite foreign to most of the Lonergan community. Few would think of *Insight* as a parallel to Joos’ doctrinal graduate text of the same length, in the same decade, *Theoretical Physics*. What then of the parallel between the more advanced *Method*

Lonergan's wakefulness? Read him and weep, creep, leap so that you yourself can come to be calling, cauling, loudly across "the Field."¹⁷

"I went up the slope calmly but my heart was beating quickly with fear that he would seize me by the ankles. When I reached the top of the slope I turned around and without looking at him, called loudly across the field."¹⁸

in *Theology* and the recent *Gauging What's Real. The Conceptual Foundations of Contemporary Gauge Theories* (Richard Healey, Oxford University Press, 2007)?

¹⁷ "As defined, the horizon is a relative term: what is meaningless-to-me may not be meaningless absolutely. By way of contrast, we shall also speak of the *field*: what is beyond the field is meaningless absolutely, insoluble absolutely. The field is *the* universe, but my horizon defines *my* universe. The field regards metaphysics as such, but the horizon regards metaphysics as possible-to-me, relevant-to-me." *Phenomenology and Logic*, University of Toronto, 2001, CWL 18, 199. **W₃** is an effort to symbolize the field. It cauls loudly across the field. It seems to appall many Lonergan students, subtly trapped in a metaphysics of commonsense that is "content if their subject is included in a list not of sciences but of academic disciplines." *Method in Theology*, 3.

¹⁸ James Joyce, *The Dubliners*, "An Encounter," conclusion.