

Q. 54 [June 6th] Your writing in *The Road to Religious Reality* about the cosmos as a Symphony of Christ brings to mind the work of Matthew Fox on the Cosmic Christ. You make no mention of him in your work but perhaps you could comment on his views in relation to your own and also to varieties of functional talk?

A.54 This is an off-beat but good question. It deserves a lengthy answer: indeed there is a book there that could consider the reach of people like Chardin, Fox, Brian Swimme, Thomas Berry, the flow of non-Christian reachings for global vision, ecological redemption, inner tranquility, whatever. But that is for ye to tackle, functional collaborators of the future.¹ The previous answer, Q/A 53, was an effort of mine to point towards concrete needs and concrete possibilities. In reflecting over Matthew Fox's work, I wish to continue nudging in the same concrete direction: BUT briefly!

First, I have no problem with Fox's visionary reach. "I present a vision of a global renaissance of the human spirit, what a 'second coming,' an awakening human spirit, might effect for the survival of Mother Earth and her children."² A key problem is the meaning of **might effect**. Fox's story is probably well enough known³ and the movement from him is parallel with various other movements of visionaries who gather in particular locations and achieve some measure of good, spiritually and ecologically. Lonergan's brilliance included posing, in *Insight*,⁴ as a soluble problem, the HOW?⁵ of **might effect** and rising to a tentative solution, a sketch of a global enterprise of collaboration. I need hardly add more on that.

¹ The central challenge is the reaching of an initial working meaning of *Comparison (Method, 250)*, a meaning that sublates the second canon of hermeneutics and solves the problem of a heuristics of the Cosmic Christ. I skipped past that challenge in the previous Q/A. But, yes, there are perhaps sufficient hints for ye aspirants. Detailed puzzlings and questions will help, but having a go is a must for the mustard seeding. Might you muse over locating Fox and company in a geohistorical heuristic spherical imaging?

² Matthew Fox, *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, Harper Publishing, 1988, 2.

³ Within Google reach. It is useful to have some sense of his life work, movements associated with him, his personal practice of **might effect**. It helps us to conceive of the different life-styles demanded by different specialties. Think for instance of foundational persons, freed by collaborators to live lives of globally-collaborative fantasy. "Think," I say, but I really mean reaching uncomfortably and informedly for fantasies within the bounds, the boundings, of emergent probability. Foundations persons are to be the molecularly mediated cosmic lyric dancers flexing us into our destiny. I am here drawing attention to *Topics in Education*, CWL 10, 232, and the potentialities of the lyric subject in the "trying to remake man" (*ibid.*). Matthew Fox is caught in a pre-culture of care doing the Damon Runyon thing: "how are you doing? I'm doing what I can," of which Lonergan wrote on page 253 of *Insight*.

⁴ It is strange that people don't goggle at the audacious leap of Lonergan in the climb towards envisaging Cosmopolis at the end of the seventh chapter of *Insight*.

⁵ Here we can pause for a note on functional talk, mentioned in the question. Fox is very much pre-functional talk in relation to its distant mature sense, which I represent here and elsewhere as HOW talk

Lonergan's solution is to be a global venture in democracy and science way beyond Fox's vision, or anyone else's.⁶ But Fox has a magnificent cluster of commonsense insights, "timely and fruitful ideas,"⁷ that need to be cycled and recycled. He lists⁸ needed laudable cultural shifts, all of which deserve further effective cyclic attention, but I wish here only to touch on one piece of that list, "from rationalism to mysticism,"⁹ and only with the briefest imaginative suggestion. Certainly, the great suggestions he has about mysticism are to be implemented, but please note that they are suggested by him in a wise and contextualized reasonable fashion. Fox is rational, but he is not a rationalist: he is spontaneously at home in wonder, but not self-appreciatively so. He does not write or speak or encourage the HOW language that is to be pivotal in the global renaissance for which he longs. BUT: he believes implicitly in reason, despite truncation.

There is much much more to be said but have I not made two key points: [a] that Fox, unbeknownst¹⁰ to himself, believes in thinking, [b] that his **might effect** is a problem? If I were to make a third of many points it would be regarding his leanings towards rescuing sexuality.¹¹

in its Tower and functional blossoming. HOW is a neat symbol for "Home Of Wonder," a level of self-luminosity that is "quite difficult to be at home in." *Method in Theology*, 14.

⁶ This no doubt seems an exaggeration, but let us follow on from note 5 with a leap to *Method* 261, where Lonergan talks of "Augustine's penetrating reflections on knowledge and consciousness," and Descartes and Pascal, and Newman: "all remain within the world of commonsense apprehension and speech yet contribute enormously to our understanding of ourselves." These contributions fall short of the "third way" (*Method in Theology*, 3) and the third stage of meaning. How, HOW, many of these names are to survive in the mature science? Add Fox to our list of Fs (see Q/A 53, at note 24) and move on in the alphabet, perhaps starting with G: Goethe, Gilson, Gadamer, Girard, ... Geffre. "Today an account of man's salvation cannot get along without an adequate understanding of man himself. R. P. Claude Geffre, O.P., has made the point at some length: we are living in a new age of theology." (Lonergan, "Aquinas Today: Tradition and Innovation," *A Third Collection*, New York, Paulist, 51). Lonergan is referring to Claude Geffre, *Un nouvel age de la theologie* (Paris: Cerf, 1972). Lonergan goes on here (51-53) to emphasize continuity and his view in 1974 stands. My emphasis is on discontinuity, a discontinuity symbolized by our different treatments of Research: contrast Lonergan in *Method* chapter 6 with the *FuSe* Essays, 0 – 9. Lonergan had neither the time nor the energy to spell out the discontinuities involved in "some third way ... difficult and arduous" (*Method*, 4). Here we might pause over Geffre as we pause over Fox and ask about the 'unbeknownst' (see note 10 below on this, and then continue into note 12).

⁷ *Insight*, 254 and 264.

⁸ *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, 134-35.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 134.

¹⁰ Here I follow up on note 5 and return to *Method*, page 14. "In a sense everyone knows and observes transcendental method," as Mathew Fox does, but he is not at home there. It is important to get to grips with the subtle habitation of the unbeknownst in eloquence regarding humanity's loneliness and desires, whether one is considering the scriptures of any tradition or the recent centuries of

The reach of his effort – and indeed of all the new age stuff – needs, deserves, recycling. The effective **might effect** pivots on the mighty effectiveness of the answer to the problem of Cosmopolis. Why do the Lonergan people not share the light? Ha! Now there's a nicely ambiguous question!

The recycling, of course, would lift Matthew Fox's genuine but vague reaches regarding the Cosmic Christ into the metaexplanatory vision of our lives in The Symphony of Christ, a vision and reality lurking there in **W₃**, in the **+** sign.¹²

existentialism. Both the "neglected subject" and the "truncated subject" (Lonergan, *A Second Collection*, 73) can be eloquent about *The Lonely Crowd* (Riesman) of today or the lover of ancient times.

¹¹ To Fox's reflections on sexuality in *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, pp. 163-80, one should add his larger contextualization in the later work (2000), *One River, Many Wells*, pp.308-34. The context for Lonergan students is obviously "Finality, Love, Marriage," *CWL* 1, 17-52. I have regularly drawn attention to the problematic character of the topics in the final pages there, to which problematic Fox also draws attention. "I believe that the Western church, following the spirit of St. Augustine, basically regrets the fact that we are sexual, sensual creatures."

¹² For many people the notion of there being a heavy meaning to such a simple symbol as **+** is a startling suggestion. If you have follow through, to some beginner's extent, the invitations of the final *Posthumous* essays to subjectivize the notional acts in God, then you beginning to sense the radiant subjectivity of the **+** in **W₃**'s line "3P + H". Then you can go back to the text referred to in note 6, where Lonergan talks of continuity, and read freshly, with open creative informed hope, the final lines. "As Aquinas, so we too can place the meaning and significance of the visible universe as bringing to birth the elect – the recipients to whom God gives himself in love, in the threefold giving that is the gift of the Holy Spirit to those that love (*Rom.* 5:5), the gift of the divine Word made flesh and dwelling amongst us (*John* 1: 14), the final gift of union with the Father who is originating love (*I John* 4 : 8,16)." The Tower community needs to lift the meaning of God way beyond the meanings of God for Abraham and Paul and John into such a world as *Insight* chapter 19 expresses and beyond that, beyond *CWL* 8, 9, 11 and 12, into the transformed Trinitarian theology that I symbolize as **G_{jk}ⁱ**. I write of a meaning of God **beyond** but of course it is a meaning of God **within**, and the Tower effort has to add a hugely rich context of divine subjectivities' causal intimacies, something way **beyond** and way intimate, intime - mates. It relates to the detailed personal historical causality of the Cosmic Word. Here is not the place to venture further on that but I would point out leads from another area of Crowe's work that "deserves recycling": pages 134-142 of his *Christ and History. The Christology of Bernard Lonergan from 1932 to 1982* (Novalis, 2005). This entire book is, indeed, a great shot at FS₁. I would note especially the issue of "the idea of historical causality" (*op. cit.*, 135, last line) that Lonergan raised, a causality **beyond** Aristotle's list, and I would associate its meaning with another Lonergan question regarding **beyond** Thomas, "not efficiency but natural resultance" (*Verbum*, *CWL* 2, 147, at note 235). But here I am pointing to frontline work in recycling towards a Christology that would put, literally, hair-raising incarnate freshness and fleshness on the claims about "God's Control" of page 687 of *Insight*. Recall, recaul, Q/A 51's content, or at least the touching I-catching title, "You Make My Skin Caul." Now there's a **+** to your daily doings and to *John* 1: 14: the Cosmic Christ seated on your right and your sinister hand.