

Q. 56 Breaking Forward to Global Care

Q. 56 (June 12th) I find your comments on Matthew Fox very enlightening if also in spots – especially in the last footnote – very elusive. I accept that that goes with this territory, but I would like a few more leads about the “might effect” problem. Fox does have a great outreach through his writing and the institutions associated with him. But you are pushing for what seems a really remote possibility. Yes, I guess that you are going to respond that that was Lonergan’s project all along. But could you identify the project better please?

A. 56. The comments on Fox are in Q/A 54 and are certainly way too short, and the final footnote was an obscure reach of my recent self, a nudge regarding the intimate place of Jesus in this effectiveness. But here I can only turn to the broad issue of the conclusion of the question, and I want to do so in a manner that will help us on in the general task, especially as we rambled about it in Q/A 53 and Q/A 55. So I take a rather strange turn, one that jives nicely with the mention of Voegelin’s *Order and History*, but now with focus on *The Ecumenic Age*. I take a single little book to help us on our way – *The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy and the End of the Republic*, by Chalmers Johnson.¹ It is not a deeply significant choice: it is one book of legions of books on library shelves about modern imperialism and militarism. It simply offers a handy lead-in and image, a side show to Voegelin’s *The Ecumenic Age*. And perhaps it is as well to note that it is not just a shot at the Bush family and the Iraq fiasco. “In accordance with the logic of Sun Tzu, Bill Clinton was actually a much more effective imperialist than George W. Bush.”² But our problem is neatly identified in the final chapter of the book, a chapter with the book’s title:

From the moment we took on the role that included the permanent military domination of the world, we were on our own – feared, hated, corrupt and corrupting, maintaining ‘order’ through state terrorism and bribery, and given to megalomaniac rhetoric and sophistries that virtually invited the rest of the world to unite against us. We had mounted the Napoleonic tiger. The question was, would we – could we – ever dismount?³

The question was, and is, and is to be, can we effect a dismounting in these next centuries, one that moreover will turn the presently-emergent mounting Red Tiger and perhaps a later lion in Africa and a business-like Indian elephant into global “living human bodies linked together,”⁴ friends of Cosmopolis, before 9011 A.D?

¹ Metropolitan Books, New York, 2004.

² *The Sorrows of Empire*, 255. The statement begins a chapter entitled “Whatever happened to Globalization?”

³ *Ibid.*, 284.

⁴ *Insight*, 745.

First of all I would have you note that we are back with the question **boldfaced** within Q/A. 32, “Restructuring Conferences towards Effective Collaboration”: **Do you view humanity as possibly maturing – in some serious way – or just messing along between good and evil, whatever you think they are?** Is it your question now? Q/A 32 considers the various types of answer. What is your stand? You may certainly be wobbling. Take your time, but do note that the long struggle of Lonergan to come through with a concrete Cosmopolis was based on his positive stand: “Is this to be taken literally or is it figure? It would be fair and fine, indeed, to think it no figure.”⁵

We could of course spread our interests beyond the goings-on of military-industrial-political allegiances. There is the “maintaining of exorbitant prices of American pharmaceutical companies under the cover of defending ‘intellectual property rights,’”⁶ and there is the mad greed and stupidity of global finance. But you should brood on ills that have struck you personally; in the last few days I have had groanings from both a schoolgirl and an undergraduate about the brutally bad state of mathematics and economic texts: another globalized reality. But you may have other thickets of malice and stupidity on your mind: the global trade in sex-abuse, the ecological disasters of industrial farming and fishing, the idiocies of the automobile industry, the brutality of justice and imprisonment systems, the corrupt power of moneyed lobbying, or the global mythology of work. Add your own list.

Whatever the list, there is an abundance of stuff to be criticized, and indeed being criticized, on local gossip levels, and in all the layers of media, including academic media. But the issue I raise is our making the effort to rise to the concrete fantasy of lifting that limp criticism into an effective global persuasiveness.

What I am doing here is coming at the last section, eight, of *Insight’s* chapter 7, but in a fashion that is both homelier and paradoxically hope-killing. You must be gripped and stripped by the impossibility yet lift your groans into a meshing of your global loneliness with the cosmic zeal.⁷ Lonergan never lost his hope in history, His Story.⁸ So he continued his lonely climb towards a glimpse of global communal collaborative effective enlightenment regarding and guarding progress. He succeeded in finding the stepping stones of functional collaboration. The

⁵ See the final note of this essay.

⁶ *The Sorrows of Empire*, 256.

⁷ The direct reference is to the final word of *Insight* 722, but the entire repentant page builds to that.

⁸ The new contemplative theology or futurology pivots on the complex thematic of this, with the reach (see Q/A 55 at page 5) for W_{26} or W_{27} , depending on fundamental orientation. Whatever the orientation, the dense thematic is symbolized by the single word *Comparison* (*Method*, 250) and its genesis as a genetics of history pivots on the dynamic tension of active spiration and passive spiration generating history (2) (*Method*, 173). The characters of the tension are known only through faith. The story or Story emerges within consciousness ever-threatened in pilgrimage by naïveté. Post-pilgrimage, the Story is an everlasting reach in joy for the might-bes of an infinite infinity.

immorality of most of his followers – yes, it is way beyond invincible ignorance now – is that they make a career out of absorbing some few of his lesser insights into the old irrelevant modes of learned gossip. But enough (about)³ that ob-scene.

Perhaps I have answered sufficiently the line's question of my questioner: "could you identify the project better please?" Somehow, American and Chinese militarism, global pedophilia, and systemically evil educations may nudge better than the seeming remoteness of Lonergan's powerful effort in *Insight* "to flog a row of dead horses,"⁹ to expose the sickness of general bias that so sweetly infests his followers.

But have I not answered earlier parts of the question? "Fox does have a great outreach through his writing and the institutions associated with him." Indeed he does: he is doing way better than any Lonergan follower.

And my questioner is right on: "I would like a few more leads about the 'might effect' problem." Indeed, and so would I. And my questioner is right: "you are pushing for what seems a really remote possibility." That, I think, comes across well from the few illustrations mentioned above.

But, let it be claimed, I have identified manageable possibilities,¹⁰ and I pause now over the one central one that this question and indeed the whole series of questions raises. Would it not be wonderful if the Lonergan community put its mind to envisaging and to trying out effective functional collaboration in some immediately relevant zones, or indeed even in small insignificant ways? It could be quite a stumbling and odd business, though I go on occasionally here to give it a larger focus in education and economics. But you may find your niche outside that focus, in apparently insignificant work, and still help to get the show slightly on the road. So, for instance, recently I was asked about ventures into modern art history, such as my questioner of Q. 54 sought, and I came up with the following (I quote my own e-mail of a week ago):

[Think of] some new neglected idea or depth of loneliness is pointed to by some interpreter e.g. of Schiller or Rodin. Or, say, Andre Derain's *Crouching Man* (1907), CM. Is there more to CM that did not flow on into Brancusi stuff? Are there better topological nudges regarding the lonely leanings of humanity than, say, Brancusi's *Mlle*.

⁹ *For a New Political Economy*, CWL 21, 36.

¹⁰ There is no point in listing my efforts over decades; they centered on aspects of economics and education. The challenge is for each of us to find little entry zones from our own contexts. Each of us, of course, includes me: I have only so far puttered with functional talk, perhaps identifiable, as the previous Q/A suggests, as low-class functional research. Predominantly, my push has been through random dialectics towards structuring foundations, particularly the foundations for functional collaboration, a missing number (10) on page 286 of *Method in Theology*.

Pogany of 1931? Questions here about the neurodynamics of the two artists [helped by the heuristic of W_1] and about the difference in roughness [a chemical aggregate business] in the two artists imaging's objectifications. Simply put, is Brancusi too smooth, psychologically and 'stonily'? Enlarged, is the aesthetic direction of the 20th century too smooth for the realities of its storyour house and Bauhaus etc.? Are there some aesthetic leadings ahead in this, e.g. the fracturing of the Ballet's patterns as represented by the music and choreography of *The Rites of Spring*?

The broad idea behind that suggestion is that you find an interpreter with a lead and try for a bit of functional history. It does not have to be a great lead, but such that a reasonably competent modern historian can see how the meaning might splice into ongoing meaning, positively or negatively. It is an exercise, a challenge to stay on track sentence by sentence: like a third year physics student doing little particular exercises in Maxwell's Equations.¹¹ But here, intrinsic to the exercise,¹² the consequences of the effort are to be envisaged, the flow through to FS_4 and, perhaps, on round to teaching, touching, etc.

When you move to such large issues as I mentioned above you are, yes, moving to the impossible. But can a start be made, a focus be found, say, in some subsection of economics and education? Anyway, I have a flight of fancy associated with my middle note, 18, of the 35 notes of the previous A. 55, about we raggedy-assed flops finding ourselves clapping together *en retard*¹³ regarding the urgent lean-to in the new meaning of "aims at expressing knowledge"¹⁴ and of thus stimulating a vortex shift. Note 13 here talks, in Nadia Boulanger's hand and voice, of devotion, and the issue here is devotion to an effective expression that, in

¹¹ This is worth emphasizing as a parallel, except the worth is enfeebled by the fact that the vast majority of Lonergan's present followers have little experience of such efforts. See the full context of this problem in Pierrot Lambert and Philip McShane, *Bernard Lonergan: His Life and Leading Ideas*, Axial Publishing, 2010, chapter 10, "The Dominant Context of Lonergan's Life."

¹² The Maxwell exercises always involve the student in a struggle for descriptive methods. Here the struggle is for luminous explanatory shifts of one's personal meaning of $FS + UV + GS$.

¹³ The French word from hand-waving Nadia Boulanger gives a mood, and points to the mood of her life. "Do not take up music unless you would rather die than not do so. It must be an indissoluble love. And one with the great joy of learning, the firm determination to learn, the unswerving perseverance, the intense faithfulness. But primarily, if it is not better to die than not do music – then it is an excuse. And if not then, why, why?" (Alan Kendall, *The Tender Tyrant, Nadia Boulanger: A Life Devoted to Music*, London, 1976, 14).

¹⁴ Again, I refer to the beginning of Lonergan's discussion of history, but to be read now with a massively fresh "lean forward" meaning. I recall the concluding sentence on page 3 of *Posthumous* 19, "What is Good, Always is Concrete," and the notes and discussion there: "Our deepest bent is towards 'Remembering the Future,' our most realistic what-questions are towards what-might-be." For a fuller suspicion of that deepest bent regarding what-might-be, see the final sentence in note 8 above.

Loneragan's voice and hand, is an incarnation of "what on earth is to be done?"¹⁵ Might we not, as a group, swing from the "effete"¹⁶ debates and expressions of the "opinions"¹⁷ of others to a lifting of contemporary protest from the helpless streets towards energizing the seeding of effective global forums¹⁸ that are to relentlessly, "with unswerving perseverance," grow in the power of recycling deep loneliness and fruitful ideas? Might we not, as a stage on the way there, refocus our efforts to see what might be effected in the two realms of academic economic texts and particular ordinary school texts? Pick your focus, in or out of the Tower, and begin to sow the seeds of changing the face of philosophy¹⁹ and theology into a futurology that "aims at expressing knowledge of history (1)."

Such a pick and a change cannot but be massively discomfiting. The Summer Lonergan Conferences of 2013 are underway, rolling and roiling in the old ruts, and I feel now like the character of the final chapter of *The Road to Religious Reality*: "'Stop!' Mooney cried out over the trading floor."²⁰ I suspect that the trading floor will survive my objections. But I'm glad the objections have been made quite publically, even though they have been met with silence by the Lonergan leadership. And now it seems quite bright of me to say to myself, over the trading floors of academe, Stop. The flow of questions has in fact halted, and what, for me and others, is now in the air, in the Symphony, is the preparation for the Vancouver Conference of July 2014. There will, I hope, be efforts to do effective functional thinking, efforts that give rise to promising Abstracts, to be shared privately and creatively, so that perhaps we move to a thin

¹⁵ At the conclusion to Lonergan's letter of 1935 to a superior. The letter is reproduced in full in Pierrot Lambert and Philip McShane, *Bernard Lonergan: His Life and Leading Ideas*, Axial Publishing, 2010, 144-54.

¹⁶ *Method in Theology*, 99.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁸ My archival essay, "Arriving in Cosmopolis" (available at: <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/archive8.pdf>) talks of populations within specialties, but it does not even raise the complex issue of the layers of social structures involved. Think of the 20th century's unsuccessful "League of Nations" or "The United Nation." Think of the reach of a luminous "World Health Organization" or a serious follow-up on Branson's venture. But above all, begin to read the display of *Method in Theology*, page 48, in a powerfully fresh way, with suspicions (about)³ the futurological back-up of increasingly self-luminous neuro-sociological sciences. The mature "institutions" are way beyond present fantasy; the "roles, tasks" are Lonergan's glorious heuristic discovery.

¹⁹ There is a commonsense sowing that I can associate with the strategy of Walkabout talked of in earlier Q/As (see Q/A 21 and Q/A 53 at note #9). Eric Voegelin used to joke about entering a new department and checking "which of the members would condemn me to death in a totalitarian state." Your own department members may only want you not to get tenure! At any rate, Walkabout – in Campus or Town – has the paradoxical value of showing the impossibility of the task. My last serious Walkabout was in Oxford a few years ago. Join with me in a fantasy about Town and Gown being weaved towards luminous self-respect, a self-respect mediating self-appreciation and the economic promise of a global covenant in line with *Jeremiah* 31: 31-34.

²⁰ *The Road to Religious Reality*, 40.

probability statistics of getting Lonergan's Dream on the road next year. "Is this to be taken literally or is it figure? It would be fair and fine, indeed, to think it no figure."²¹

²¹[I cheekily add here the final note in the final *Posthumous* essay, "Rewriting and Righting Allurexperiences" (available at: <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/posthumous-21.pdf>). The reference to the quotation above is given immediately in it.]

"I quote here the final words of Lonergan's early "Essay on Fundamental Sociology," with, of course, a twist of meaning. He is writing of *Isaiah* 2: 2-4, the shift from spears to sickle. I am writing about the shift to an effective human global care twined into eternal Craving Christing Cherishing. But now, amazingly for me, a Benzine Ring of collaboration, a Buckyball around the globe, a Dream of Ganesh or Gerontius (but quite the opposite of 'shapeless, scopeless, blank abyss') : a final note that is surely one with "the music of the spheres" (*Pericles*, 5. i. 227). We – or rather I as speaker of the first of those five sections of either *Method in Theology* chapter 4 or chapter 11, or of a melody of the 1833 Overture – have arrived at the core of the solution to the third cycle of seminars on world religions which would have occupied the group around *FuSe* 55-79. (On this see the 24 pages of *FuSe* 10, "Contexts of Functional Interpretation," (available at: <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/fuse-10.pdf>). The common Tower judgment of religious value, of being in love with God, is to regard and guard "Thought on Method is Apt." It is the follow-through on the 26th place of *Insight* 19.9, but to be radiantly self-luminous in the context of the 21st place there: "every created agent is an instrument in executing the divine plan." *Insight*, CWL 3, 687. It is to be a subject-as-subject-as-subjects-as-Subjects embracing of atman in Brahman with Brahman. It is to lift Fred Crowe's reflections on "the sacrament of the present moment." *Theology of the Christian Word. A Study in History*, Paulist Press, 1978, 113-15. The whole research-book is to be transposed into a spiraling sacramental dynamics of The Tower. It is to crown the search for authentic secularity and to make regally true, 10,000 years from now or even a little slower, the coming convergence of world religions. So, in this long ramble of months, or decades, you have my section 1, inviting you to join – section 2 – in that global finding, fair and fine: indeed, no figure."