

Introduction

The shift of perspective noted in the Preface changed the character of this enterprise considerably. This should be no surprise for those who take Lonergan's view of concept seriously. "The conceptualization of understanding is, when fully developed, a system and one must advert to the implication of systematic knowledge in the Aristotelian and Thomist *quod quid est* if one would grasp the precise nature of the concept; the concept emerges from understanding, not an isolated atom detached from all context, but precisely as part of a context, loaded with the relations that belong to it in virtue of a source which is equally the source of other concepts."¹ A simple instance may startle some readers. Consider the definition of the circle in the first chapter of *Insight*. Simple? What, really, is the definition of the circle in Euclidean geometry? The definition is not somehow outside the axioms of the geometry; it is within the mesh of the full geometry, and one can say of the lady geometer what Lonergan says, inadvertently and non-exclusively of course, of the male geometer: "he's got the whole thing right in his intellectual paws, so to speak."²

The shift, nonetheless, does not cause a fundamental difficulty: the fundamental difficulty was already haunting my enterprise, but this shift brought it luminously to the fore, the forehead, for me. What is that fundamental difficulty? It is the difficulty of a profound paradigm shift in all types of inquiry, seminally inaugurated by Lonergan in the discovery of February 1965 that found its way in *Gregorianum* 50(1969) That same year I was startled by its radical relevance to problems in musicology and I gave

¹Lonergan, *Verbum. Word and Idea in Aquinas*, University of Toronto Press, 1997, 238.

²Lonergan, *Phenomenology and Logic*, University of Toronto Press, 2001, 357. An interesting question occurs here. Might not the lady geometer have a more wholesome grasp of the geometry? For a context to this question, see Alessandra Drage, *Thinking Woman*, Axial Publications, Cape Breton, 2005.

expression to that relevance in the Florida Conference of the next Easter.³ Since then I have been struggling in, and within, that concept of such a global inquiry. An initial optimism regarding the enthusiastic push of Lonergan's disciples to implement the discovery has been replaced by a sad acceptance that it was no more implemented than the mighty project sketched in *Insight*. My optimism remains, however: Lonergan was only the foster father of functional collaboration: history is its mother and father, and will prevail, as I regularly suggest, in the second million years.

That particular piece of my concept found integral expression in the third chapter of *Past-keynes Pastmodern Economics: A Fresh Pragmatism*,⁴ but I suspect that it did not reach my present reader. And here emerges another aspect of the fundamental difficulty. My shift in my meaning of *is* and of the *ousia* of human inquiry is a shift of the entire scheme of the cyclic "displacement to system".⁵ I would wish to keep my reader within the full contemporary challenge of that shift: but how? This book as initially conceived was to be a nudge, a very pragmatic nudge, towards the functionalization of Christology. To me, the need for a division of labor in Christology is like the nose on the human face: horrible evident in its absence. Yet a recent effort to communicate that need through a respected journal was deemed above the heads of its readers.⁶ And concomitant efforts to initiate collaboration were no more successful.

³The essay is available (on www.philipmcshane.ca) as chapter 2 of *The Shaping of the Foundations*.

⁴Axial Publications, 2000.

⁵I am using Lonergan's translation of *die Wendung zur Idee* here: see note 10 of his Introduction to his Dogmatics of the Trinity, (*De Deo Trino I*, Gregorian Press, 1964) to be published in English shortly by University of Toronto Press.

⁶In physics, an article is considered worth publishing if it is above the heads of its readers.

The article forms part of the first chapter here.

Perhaps, like Chesterton's Street-dealer, I should write the stuff in my native Erse, if only to annoy?⁷ I would hope that my title would annoy.

Or attract? It expressed for me a massive shift in the luminosity of my Christian grip on being. Are you interested, or merely annoyed? Your interest, indeed, may be that of a fellow traveller or a lady pilgrim who has already glimpsed this but not said it: you have already climbed to read *Mathew* 16:16 in a new way. And perhaps you share my global context, reaching out to Origin's Egyptians in a friendly universe?⁸ Then I am inviting you to that strange differentiation of consciousness that lifts you into synchromesh with Christ's Satisfaction.⁹

But how do I make my invitation effective?

Well, the result of my Summer effort is in your hands: I can only hope that its directives mesh with the narrative of your search. And here, perhaps, I may get down to business. I would ask you to place, or at least consider placing, that problem of meshing, and synchromeshing, in the context of the central section of *Method in Theology*, with its core demands brutally articulated at the end of page 250. That is where I would have you meet me, in your own present positioning. "Where is my life going, as a Christian thinker, in the scandal of present theology's effeteness?"

I ask you to meet me as you are in the second half of page 250 of *Method*, but I welcome you in a sharing of the climb towards the meaning of that page. So we arrive back at the fundamental difficulty, of concept, of context. My climb of one year's reading of that page, born of a collaborative effort, is mapped out in some detail.¹⁰ No doubt I can summarize, but I doubt if the climb can be massively abbreviated: crossing

⁷See the beginning of chapter four of *The Shaping of the Foundations* .

⁸The Letter to Gregory footnoted in the Preface draws attention to the challenge of despoiling the Egyptians.

⁹*Joistings* 8, on the Website, deals with this topic.

¹⁰The Website series, *SOFDAWAREs*, and *Quodlibets*.

the Ireland of a global map takes just as long as the journey with an inch-per-ten-mile map. What, then am I to put in chapter three, which centers on that strange page of *Method*? Well, I shall come to that slowly here. Part of my description of the manner in which this strange book weaves forward.

Why the weaving? Because method in theology, or Christology, is a shockingly complex cultural shift. Lonergan was magnificently right when he began the Epilogue of *Insight* with his odd claim about the shift, "I believe it would prove to be, not some brief appendage to the present work, but the inception of a far larger one". In the previous 12 pages he had mentioned collaboration 30 times. He spent the next 12 years grappling with the problem, then suddenly breaking through to a solution in terms of collaboration. But the expression of the solution was feeble, ineffectual. What he had come up with was the seed of a vision of a multi-dimensional paradigm shift that could finally establish theology - and philosophy - as a unified global science. I was 36 when he displayed that seed to me: at 73 I find the seed to be only a sapling-minding in my mind in spite of 49 years of following his clues. It seemed to me, as I grappled with the present topic, my stand with, beside, Peter and Mathew within Mathew's 16:16, that I should somehow hold the long climb up-front, a linguistic feedback. Which I do in the book.

Still, a brief direct statement of the point of arrival can be of help to those climbing with me, searching perhaps since *Method in Theology* came out for its full meaning.

I recall now - a pleasant yet relevant distraction - during my Oxford days in the early 1960s, venturing into Russian literature (in translation of course), a matter of helping me to stay sane. I was ready for *Anna Karenina*. The learned introducer of the book, alas, told me how it ended. Not a good experience for me. But my venture here, I hope, is a pleasant experience for you, a shared fantasy which yet, I claim, has solid grounds. I have attempted to share such fantasy before, particularly in an oriental

dictionary entry of the year 2500 A.D.¹¹ That was halfway through my twenty year journey of trying to make precise a suspicion that foundational work was *per se* the promotion of fantasy and function. More recently I suggested a fantasy that is closer to my invitation here regarding page 250 of *Method* and regarding the seeding of the long-term vision. In the *Quodlibets* I compare that page of *Method* with a page written by some medieval that actually got into a page a proleptic sweep of Butterfield's *Origins of Modern Science*.

What, then, of methodology at the end of the present millennium? One has to follow up more vigorously than Lonergan his pointers about paralleling methodology with the dynamics of successful science. One must, further, merge the two dynamics, so as to lift the second stage of meaning into the light, the characters' luminosity, of the third stage of meaning. We gradually escape Fontanelle's legacy and restore mystery to talk and technic. The graduality is to be a communal collaboration, intussuscepting the global surrounds of everything from Upanishad to Updike. The result is to be a creative minority, an Ovalteam humbly towering over plain meaning, mediating cyclically a refreshing of human loneliness escape and escapade-reach. The most shocking aspect of this fantasy is, is to be - but less and less so - the chasm between serious skin-rich *theoria* and description, however vibrant.

My paragraph of hope is not as clear as the death of Anna Karenina: it reaches towards the death of the longer cycle of decline. Reaches towards? Points towards? The pointing needs the slow Proustian climb towards tasting the bitter brew of that desert journey between the first and the second times of human subjects.

My twisting invitation here, and in previous decades, is towards an efficient shifting from bitter to better, even unveiling the bitter as "something better than was the

¹¹In the chapter "Systematics: A Language of the Heart" in *The Redress of Poise* (available on www.philipmcshane.ca)

reality.”¹² The **here** needs to make pilgrim-present the decades, leaving a different mark with you, on you, than the mark of Lonergan’s Preface remark in *Insight*, acknowledging “teachers and writers that have left their mark upon me in the course of the twenty-eight years that have elapsed since I was introduced to philosophy.”¹³ Can you for instance imagine, fantasize, the Christian mark that future is to make between the wonderously “closed options”¹⁴ of serious understanding and magisterial claims that pirouette on impoverished description?

I suspect that the Constantinian drift of the Christ-thing was not uppermost in your mind at the beginning of this paragraph.¹⁵ We will wind our way towards Nicea, Constantinople and beyond to fresh Ovalteam Mathew-poise in chapter 10. But it is not really a winding, but leaps around about (about about about, as we shall hint in chapter 2) that are estimated to save us gracefully from doctrinal reading.

I expect the leaps to be disconcerting. But plain writing just doesn’t do it in this century, no more than *Insight* and *Method* did it in the last. My take-off point, then, is from that long Pound-inspired effort of mine, a ten-volume million-word work of 117 Cantowers cut off strategically after four volumes. The topic of this present book is functional collaboration in the sensing of ChrISt, so some sense of function and

¹²*Method in Theology*, 251.

¹³*Insight*, xv[9].

¹⁴The title of section 2 of *Method*’s chapter on Systematics. The closure I am thinking of is the stand of the Faithful Tower against “the arrogance of omnicompetent common sense” (Lonergan, *Collected Works*, vol. 17, 370). The following footnote adds contexts.

¹⁵Barnes’ *Athanasius and Constantius* (see chapter 10) winds towards a general conclusion that one must place in the wider context of Voegelin’s *Ecumenic Age*. “The officially recognized and designated mediators between the human and the divine were now the Christian bishop and the Christian holy man” (179). The drive here can be associated with the need, in the third stage of meaning, for the mediation of the holy thinking woman in a tradition of integral kataphatic prayer, of a rebirth of an earlier Alexandrian tradition, of a community of Faith seeking functional understanding.

dysfunction is surely a start: Cantower 35 conjures up a mood in chapter 1. The second chapter turns towards global fragmentations of inquiry as seeding hope: there is to be a convergence of obscurity's hidden pressure sloping towards a quite novel re-founding of our global quest within the context of Lonergan's suggestion of a third order of human consciousness. Then the third chapter swings us back to the intimate challenge of the second half of page 250 of *Method*.

It is pretty evident that the remaining seven chapters move along through the eight specialties of Lonergan. Almost: a chapter 5 after dialectic, on "General Communications" seems oddly displaced, and considerations of it are best left to the conclusion here.

The beginning with dialectic is obviously related to the invitation to join me on page 250 of *Method*. Yet ending with questions regarding specialty history is, too, a nice rounding out or on: the fantasy and the dialectic must, to be successful, lift off at the end in a creative minority of readers towards a serious urge to reinvent the history of thinking and prayer. The chapters in between ramble towards that re-invention. Since dialectic points to the relocation of Lonergan's general categories within dialectic, I concentrate in the fourth chapter on problems of the special categories: these, after all, are the central topic of this book. Chapter 5, to be considered later, makes more precise the meaning of the nudging in chapter 6, in the entire project of this book, indeed in the nudging of scriptures referred to at the conclusion of the Preface.

Chapter 6, on Doctrines, is simply a repetition - but now in this new context - of the final Cantower, Cantower 41, "Functional Doctrines". It nudges the reader to take another reading route through the other Cantowers on function, a memory lane that yet turns us towards the future with its methodological doctrines. The reader's difficulty here will be to diagnose the remoteness of these doctrines from commonsense doctrines. This is a diagnostic challenge that haunts us, here now, and I have sought to make it acute by settling for a peculiar perspective in the two chapters, 5 and 8, which deal with what I call the frontier zone of the Tower. In the specialties Research and

Communications there is the per se mutual mediation between the Ovalteam and the concrete mystery of common sense. I have found a prevailing tendency to regard these specialties as somehow a “comedown” from *theoria*: they are not: they, the specialists in research and communications, share the full richness and challenge of the rest of the Tower community. That is a central point in the treatment of those two specialties.

Chapter 7 is a piece of work of 25 years ago. Obviously, it is not my present meaning, but it remains, I would claim, a relevant set of pointers regarding both the complexity of Communications and the genetic structure of Systematics. Since my startled discovery of the new systematics as essentially genetic - think of the acorn of New Testament reality and the wind-blown sapling oak of present times - I have found that generally thinkers do not easily grasp the character of that rich genetic element in the full operation of functional specializations. The younger *I* sends out a less strange message than the old guy of 73. But more on this when I come, at the end, to comment on that pivotal chapter 5.

In the final two chapters we arrive at the massive problem posed by note 1 of chapter 7 of *Method*. So, chapter 9 has a shot at interpreting the obscure canons of hermeneutics in a manner that throws light on the eventual permanent Faithful meaning of the truths about ChrISt. Chapter 10 lifts these considerations into the larger context of history. I was fortunate to receive, half way through my project, Fr. Fred Crowe’s recent book on Lonergan’s Christology.¹⁶ It provides a complementary context: Crowe’s presents Lonergan’s achievement: I reach out to Lonergan’s basis of a future achievement that will prove to be remarkably discontinuous from present efforts.

What might I mean by *discontinuous*? And how might I write to you about that meaning and that discontinuity? So, I come now to my consideration of that peculiar chapter 5, on “General Communications”. As I type I listen the one pianos concerto that

¹⁶*Christ and History. The Christology of Bernard Lonergan from 1935 to 1982*, Novalis Press, St. Paul’s University, Ottawa, 2005.

Beethoven never played, his fifth: when he wrote it he was already too deaf to control the performance. And I recall Askenazy's reply to being asked by a radio interviewer, in the winter of 1989, about Beethoven: "I will not speak of Beethoven".

In chapter 10, I arrive at writing about Lonergan going into an exile of *ousia*-search in 1935: that quest was his from much earlier, but certainly a heart possession when he noted methodology as a possible university topic in the twenties. The *ousia*-quest that dominated his life was the quest for a thematic of the human quest, a luminous heuristic *ousia*. Chapter 5 seeks to intimate the character of such a climb and the problem of communications that surround it. It is where I would advise you to begin your reading of this book. It ends with a section on the problem of general knowledge, which meshes with two other sections on the same topic, the concluding sections of chapters 2 and 8. These three sections are a suitable follow-up after your preliminary reading of chapter 5. Among the many issues that they raise is the existential question, What do you make of Lonergan's short statement, at the age of fifty, about theology, quoted in each of those sections? Its meaning certainly is beyond me, at age 73. Might you share the climb towards a better glimpse of his meaning? Might you become a stranger to yourself of this year, and each year a stranger to yourself of last year? These are existential questions answered in our time with a firm NO. But it seems to me that the normative answer is YES. Circumstances and the evil of these axial times may not allow you that growth. But you may at least take a stand on remote meaning. Askenazy can tune into Beethoven in a deep adult fashion: but you also can listen, admire, expand.

Epilogue to the Introduction

This book emerged in July, 2005, prior to the lectures for which it was originally intended. It goes now on the Website and it seems appropriate to add that the lectures were altogether different from the book. There arose, then, the temptation to add a

lengthy Epilogue to the book that would note developments and directions in the lectures. Such a presentation does exist: it is *Joistings 10*, in which I lean heavily on the drive of the last two days of the lectures, when I focused on aspects of John's Christology.¹⁷ But *Joistings 10* contains also fresh directions related to making the case for functional specialization, which indeed was a main purpose in taking Christology as a zone of tentative application for functional method. It is certainly a worthwhile follow-up reading. It is the hopefilled beginning of a new effort to get functional specialization moving in some modest fashion. *Joistings 10* goes on the Website, with this book, on December 1st, and with them goes an invitation to begin to participate in that new effort. By March 1st 2006 I shall have more to say, in *Joistings 11*, especially if there is positive response to my out-reach. That essay is to handle various modest ways of moving towards the implementation of Lonergan's key achievement. Curiously, though, it is *Joistings 12* that tackles head on some of the basic issues in Christology in that it seeks to sketch the large task of working out a "General Methodology", or what Lonergan would have called a *general metaphysics*. That task relates to overcoming "Obstacles to Metaphysical Control"¹⁸ that haunt Christology as well as every other fundamental topic.

However, a realistic perspective on the task of doing Christology in a progressive fashion looks not to such complexification but to enough of a shared conviction of the need for functional work as to give rise to some group modestly having a shot at doing what I have described as the Ovalteam thing. More about this, therefore, in *Joistings 11*.

¹⁷The title of *Joistings 10* is key: "What do you want?" are the first words of Jesus in John's Gospel.

¹⁸The title of an article to appear in *Method. Journal of Lonergan Studies* in 2006.