

LEBENSRAUM, SEETORAUM

The Sent of Yahweh made us children of the Most High, yet unimaginably more, weaving us into an absolutely supernatural romance. That is the Galilean worldview of the Sent who sent Another. Might we now begin to effectively climb to an attunement with that impossibly lonely Galilean's worldview so as to “rescue the weak and the needy.”¹

This morning, the eve of the Feast of St. Ignatius, Fareed Zakaria, the very distinguished Indian-American journalist, talked of the emergence of China as the leading world power.² On his Google page there is one of his statements that would firm up my view of his take on the present global situation. “*It’s not possible for two countries to be the leading dominant political power at the same time.*” Does it not bring to mind the German movement that bubbled forward a century ago towards the Nazis of the mid-century and the reach for *Lebensraum*?

The mention of St. Ignatius is to the point. What do his followers think about this juggling of powers for world dominance? Obviously, here I am thinking in particular of the followers of Jesuit Bernard Lonergan, but might I not broaden my net and my interest to include the present Catholic leader, Pope Francis?

And might I not make my reach somewhat discomfoting by recalling the last quotation from scripture in Lonergan’s *Method* that is surely dear to Pope Francis?

“... may they all be one . . . ”

¹ The quotation is from the Epilogue, “The Birth of Christianity,” to my *The Allure of the Compelling Genius of History* (Axial Publishing, 2015), 250. The title is taken from, and comments on, John Dominic Crosson, *The Birth of Christianity: What Happened in the Years Immediately After the Death of the Execution of Jesus*, San Francisco, HarperCollins, 1998. I would note the ambiguity of the phrase Galilean World View. It is the title of subsection 3.3 of *Insight*, chapter 3.

² Fareed Zakaria does a regular CNN Sunday program. On July 30th 2017 he interviewed Gideon Rachman, the author of the recently published *Easternization: Asia’s Rise and America’s Decline From Obama to Trump and Beyond*. Zakaria has been on the topic for some time: see H. Kissinger, N. Ferguson, D. Daokui Li, and F. Zakaria, *Does the 21st Century belong to China?* Toronto, House of Anansi Press, 2011.

Is there not a sense in which the Second Person of the Triune God seeks to be *the leading dominant political power*? A sense in which Christian

progress is a fundamental concept in any theory of the external flow, the effective solidarity of mankind. For what is important in any flow is its differential. What flowed in the dim and distant past is of no earthly interest to us. But the differentials of what has flowed since integrate into the reality of the present and then it is of supreme concern to us. Further the differentials of flow are something beyond the elements, the individuals in the flow. The nineteenth century was a century prating of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness. It had no concern for the differentials of the flow in virtue of an asinine confidence in political economists. It has landed the twentieth century in an earthly hell.³

A sense of leading—lifting that problem of fresh differentials—that “leads one to speak of the church as a process of self-constitution within worldwide society.”⁴ “Accordingly, the Christian church is a process of self-constitution, a *Selbstvollzug*.”⁵

But it does not so lead the present movement associated with the huge effort of Bernard Lonergan to turn us all towards that ontic and phyletic self-constitution in unimaginable differentials of living. So we arrive back, *Finnegans Wake* style, at the beginning of *Method*. “Thought on method in apt to run in some one of three channels.”⁶ We can putter along in some pious resonance with “the example of the master.”⁷ We can be a little bolder and pick up on the muddled, paradoxically unconcerned, beginnings of global care that breathe and breed “an analogy of science,” or of “academic disciplines.”⁸ But our full boldness, the boldness of that Lonergan essay of 1936, is to seed effectively a “third way ... difficult and laborious.”⁹ So we arrive back freshly at that third paragraph of *Method in Theology*, which invites

³ Lonergan, *Essay in Fundamental Sociology*, 19–20. The page-reference is to Michael Shute, Lonergan’s *Economic Early Research. Texts and Commentary*, University of Toronto Press, 2010. Referred to below as *Essay in Fundamental Sociology*. The essay is part of a larger work—the rest missing—from the mid-1930s. For details see Michael Shute, *The Origin of Lonergan’s Notion of the Dialectic of History*, University Press of America, 1993, 74–99. This is a powerful context both for my plea regarding the need to begin afresh to read Lonergan and for sensing the effective metaphysics, the mysterious cosmopolis, for which he was soul-searching.

⁴ *Method in Theology*, 363.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ We remain in the problem of that first page of *Method*.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

us strangely, to the problems of those eight occurrences of the word “situation”¹⁰ in the final chapter on “Communications”, and thus invites us to think forwards to eight functionally related layers of situation rooms,¹¹ rooms that would be seetorooms, seeing to, in situ—including a seetoasian ethic—the effective dynamics of the making a creative phyletic one of our global ontic loneliness. My punning is massively important here. It leads me to make an extravagant suggestion about the 21 paragraphs of *Method in Theology*, chapter 14, section 4.

What if these 21 paragraphs have been as brutally badly read as the first three or four paragraphs of the book?

What, then, if we struggle to rise to read, in my punning context, in the context of Fareed Zakaria’s pointing to China, the title of that fourth section of *Method* chapter 14 with a twist?

Here you are then:

4. THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND ITS CONTEMPORARY SEETOASIAN

Let me try to stretch your imagination further here, where the trying is as difficult as my trying over years to stretch Lonergan students’ neurodynamics to read the early paragraphs of the book.¹² Imagine, now, as best you can, the 21 paragraphs as paralleling the description of the first 21 piano concertos of Mozart that you can easily find by Googling?¹³ Leap, perhaps, even now, to a memory, however faint, of that magnificent 2nd movement of the 21st Piano

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 358.

¹¹ A compact popular account is given in chapter 12, “The Situation Room: The Stupid View of Wolf Blitzer,” in my *Profit: The Stupid View of President Donald Trump*, Axial Publishing, 2016. For an account in the fuller context see *Allure*, chapter 16, “Communications and Metaphysics as Science.”

¹² The essay, [Humus 2](#), “*Vis Cogitativa*: Contemporary Defective Patterns of Anticipation,” points to the domineering presence in our neurochemistry of patterns of a mind-limiting axial superego. That presence is manifest in biblical studies and its pastoral output. But here the issue is the study of the Church and its churches. It is to be a massive stretch of the molecules of fantasy to get beyond that study as a matter of reviewing fixed conventions of 2000 years that ground a tinkering with its present ineffective, even destructive, structures. More profoundly, it is a matter of us coming to grips methodologically with the meaning of *Comparison* on *Method in Theology*, 250, and that meaning’s solving of the problem of the mystical body of Christ raised in *Insight*, 763–4.

¹³ Even one without a serious musical background can get the idea of the parallel between, so to speak, the two sets of 21 paragraphs. Further, even without that background, one can stumblingly stretch the imagination to envisage the concerto of meaning lurking in each paragraph of Lonergan’s pointings. Might you push on, and push on our community of care, to bring forth the project and the reality of, say, the 21 para-graphed performable works of creative ecclesiology that would lift us effectively beyond present feeble initial meanings of Christian institutions?

Concerto, the Andante in F Major.¹⁴ Think of it in terms of the second movement—second sentence—of the 21st paragraph of *Method in Theology* 14.4.¹⁵ Ask seriously what could that second-sentence-description of the inner concerto of Lonergan meaning mean when applied to Mozart, and then applied freshly to Lonergan? “To operate on the level of our day is to apply the best available knowledge and the most efficient techniques to coordinate group action.”¹⁶ Group’s gather centuries later to bring Mozart’s genius into the weave of our struggle for progress. Might not groups gather in later millennia to bring Lonergan’s genius effectively into that weave? Only if some generation—might it be yours, in this century?—begins to listen feebly to his concerto sketches.

Does this help to generate in your neuromolecular bent a horrified suspicion that we have, perhaps, failed to rise to the level of Lonergan’s day-dream? Might we share more of this hermeneutics of suspicion together, share indeed, group-wise, in stumbling forum expressions of aspirations, so as to come “with the relief of waking from a nightmare, to meditate on the rise and decline of all cultures *and* political forms”?¹⁷

The meditation that I recommend, of course, is some parallel to the challenge of being caught contemplatively in *The Allure of the Compelling Genius of History*, moving thus beyond an ineffective entrapment of a twirling round about of initial meanings.¹⁸

¹⁴ The second movement was featured in the 1967 Swedish film *Elvira Madigan*. As a result, the piece has become widely known as the *Elvira Madigan* concerto.

¹⁵ “level of our day” in the sentence echoes “level of one’s times” (*Method*, 350) and “level of one’s age” (*ibid.*, 351), pages in which Lonergan is pointing towards the difficulty of explanatory interiority. This world was entirely beyond Mozart, but the parallel stands: both men were quite beyond the level of their times.

¹⁶ *Method in Theology*, 367.

¹⁷ *Essay in Fundamental Sociology*, 25.

¹⁸ Entrapment in initial meanings is a central topic of the book. See *Allure*, 145, and note 23 there. The lead-in pointing to the topic is Lonergan’s comment, “Not only are words sensible, but their initial meaning commonly is sensible.” (*Insight*, 567. A note there refers to Susanne Langer, *Feeling and Form*, 236–57, and the note begins by pointing out that “an accurate statement on initial meanings would be much more complex.”) The accuracy will pivot on the cosmopolis of global functional collaboration. The problem I draw attention to here is the problem of being bogged down in a very complex network of initial meanings in our conventional answering of the questions: What is Christianity? What is the Christian Church? Is there, in that brickyard, slivers of open soil for the seeds of the *Isaiah* 2:2-4 vision that Lonergan concludes to and about in the final sentence of the *Essay in Fundamental Sociology*? How do we get that seed to break ground in the stony world of present

The slim effective salvific answer to the question of adequate meanings demands that we go beyond such twirlings to the structured vortex of Cosmopolis and its Tower surrealism. We are thus, in a fulsome subtle sense, at the birth of Christianity.¹⁹

church structures, so that the earth may indeed be won, be one? “Is this to be taken literally or is it figure? It would be fair and fine to think it no figure.” *Essay in Fundamental Sociology*, 44.

¹⁹ *Allure*, 250–1. The concluding words of the Epilogue, “The Birth of Christianity.” Recall note 1 above.