

Bridgepoise 5

2010 Moves Towards the 2020 Collaboration of Lonergan Students.

The primary event that nudged me to write this essay is the meeting being organized by Ken Melchin at the conclusion of the 2010 Boston Workshop. It is to reach, he tells me, towards fostering collaborative structures. My interest here is in presenting, as succinctly as possible, my view of one core direction of that collaboration. I begin this in Part One. In Part Two I permit my self to ramble a little on present promises and problems of that core collaboration. In Part Three, under the quaint title of “Limp Leight,” I turn to the practicalities of aiming at a 2020 vision, even to discomfoting resolutions¹ suggested for the Boston Gathering of June 26, 2010.

I. The Core Direction

If I am to be brief it seems best to pick up where Fr. Fred Crowe left off in his 1964 Introduction to the task of following Lonergan. He writes of the labour required of followers “without which they have little chance of understanding what Lonergan is doing and talking about. This is rather bluntly said, I am afraid, but is there not room for a measure of bluntness at this stage?”² He writes in the year before Lonergan’s break-through to the notion of functional collaboration, a break-through which, it seems to me, lifts permissible measures of bluntness considerable, especially in the light of the

¹There is, in fact, only one bold-faced resolution expressed in the final section. It regards the Bridgepoise mentioned in the first paragraph of chapter 5 of *Insight*, a bridge to a sufficient poise regarding the study of humanity. But the resolution represents a massive change of attitude and the centre of a cluster of discomfoting moves.

However, there is a less discomfoting invitation offered at the end, related to the present work of the SGEME society, related to the previous *Bridgepoise*. That invitation is to simply pick up on the challenge of promoting Lonergan’s shift of economic variables, a shift that would constitute economics as a science. But more on that in the concluding footnote.

²F.E. Crowe, “The Exigent Mind: Bernard Lonergan’s Intellectualism,” *Spirit as Inquiry. Studies in Honor of Bernard Lonergan S.J.*, Herder and Herder, New York, 1964, 27.

brutal neglect, over four decades, of Lonergan's doctrine of collaboration.

I am being blunt and brutal. I aim to do more than embarrass, recalling Lonergan's warm pointing: "doctrines that are embarrassing will not be mentioned in polite company."³ But the more that I wish to do is to add to embarrassment, not blame or accusation, but an effective plea that up-dates the plea in Crowe's article.

Crowe goes on to plea in terms of parallels: paralleling the reader's own biography with Lonergan's; paralleling the effort required with the dynamics of spiritual exercises; drawing similarly on the pleas of Kirkegaard. "The last ignominy, for Kirkegaard, would be for someone to say, 'this author represents inwardness.'"⁴

Crowe's pointing shortens my effort here and allows me to focus on an analogy which he does not develop, the analogy that reaches out to "bolder spirits. They select the conspicuously successful sciences of their time."⁵ Crowe points towards this, in relation to Lonergan's own life, in the conclusion of his article. "His own objective doctrine has shown convincingly that the world of theory and the world of community do not mix in themselves, and the best we can do towards their integration is learn to pass without too great a jolt from one to the other."⁶ In other works I intimate how we can and may do better and move to a global integral consciousness in later millennia. But here I wish to push, in simpler fashion, the analogy with successful science.

I am not only pushing an analogy: I am posting a challenge regarding the simplest of the sciences. First there is the analogy, contained in my title *Lonergan's Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry*.⁷ I took the name *Standard Model* from

³*Method in Theology*, 299.

⁴Crowe, *op.cit.*, 28.

⁵Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 3.

⁶Crowe, *op. cit.*, 32.

⁷The book is available on the website www.philipmcshane.ca, as is the book to which it is a sequel, *Method in Theology: Revisions and Implementations*. The prior book should be read

contemporary physics' use of it.⁸ What is this Standard Model of Lonergan? Well, it is what he names powerfully in those two pages of *Method in Theology*, 286-287 : the secular part of his proposal. Two points are worth noting, for our purpose here, with regard to that proposal. The first need not be quibbled over: to Lonergan's (1) - (9) I usually add (10), summarily expressed in some way. (10) has to do with the functional collaboration which is the drive of the book towards solving the problem of cosmopolis that lurks in the previously described nine.⁹

The second point I would make is an appeal: that the central paragraph of page 287 be read with existential seriousness by each of us - preferably privately but profitably in public, "at pains not to conceal his [or her] tracks."¹⁰ The appeal, indeed could well have been a second resolution to the one related to the first paragraph of chapter 5 of *Insight* that I focus on in Part Three , but I wish not to invite distraction from that single resolution. However, I would note that either or both resolutions are grist for the mill of some personal stand-taking that mirrors the large communal enterprise spelled out in the second half of page 250 of *Method in Theology*.

But note how the two challenges relate. The first paragraph of *Insight* points, discomfortingly and bluntly, to a natural bridge to human studies. "From such a broadened base", a grip on the simplest zone of our spreadoutness, "one can go on". It

first.

⁸On the standard model and its progress see notes 17 and 20 below. What of other views? "The next step in creating a more unified theory of the basic interactions will probably be much more difficult. All the major theoretical developments of the last twenty years, such as grand unification, supergravity, and supersymmetric string theory, are almost completely separated from experience. There is great danger that theoreticians may get lost in pure speculations"(L. O'Riafeartaigh and N.Straumann, "Group Theory: Origins and Modern Developments,"*Reviews of Modern Physics* 72 (2000), 15.)

⁹On the identification of the characteristics of cosmopolis with those of global functional collaboration see *Joistings* 22: "Reviewing Mathews' *Lonergan's Quest*, and Ours".

¹⁰*Method in Theology*, 293.

is a brutal demand on the type of thomism that prevailed in the first half of the twentieth century.¹¹ And that brutal demand is echoed in the central paragraph of page 287. “One can go on”: I recall myself going on to read chapter 6 of *Insight*, with a sigh of relief, in 1958. And - let this cheer you up! - I had the advantage of coming to chapter five with an M.Sc. in the related area, yet found that I had no idea what Lonergan was talking about in that chapter. But then I found that my sigh of relief was premature: the next two chapters of “uncommon sense” baffled me all the way to Lonergan’s concluding joke at the end of chapter 7: “may we note before concluding that, while common sense relates things to us, our account of common sense relates it to its neural basis and relates aggregates and successions of instances of common sense to one another.”¹²

I am thus naming the standard model as something reached by Lonergan, but not reached by us in any seriously comprehending manner. Further, I would note that this is sadly and deeply true about his discovery of the key to the standard model of scientific progress that is functional collaboration. I would say of the terms and relations of the omnidisciplinary collaborative structure discovered by Lonergan what he said about his own long search in economics. “To discover such terms is a lengthy and painful process of trial and error. *Experto Crede*.”¹³

After 44 years - I started with Lonergan’s help in the Summer of 1966 - I begin to

¹¹Lonerganism, in the main, came out of that thomism as it coloured the minds of the students of Lonergan in Rome. Their venturing into pragmatisms and existentialisms and postmodernisms and comparative studies have been distractions from the main plea to be at the level of one’s times. See, in particular, *Method in Theology* 317, 350-1. Also Lonergan’s letter of 1935, Image 22 of chapter 9 in the book referenced below in note 18. The broader academic and non-academic cultural context, of course, was and is that described in the final section of *Insight* chapter 7.

¹²The last sentence of chapter 7 of *Insight*. The shocking challenge that this claim poses for philosophy emerges only slowly, in such topics as the existential “comeabout” specified on *Insight* 537 and the second canon of hermeneutics of *Insight* 609.

¹³*For A New Political Economy*, 112.

glimpse the massive cultural revolution that is to be global functional collaboration. Were I to suggest an additional resolution for the move towards 2020 vision I would ask that each of us spell out just what we think Lonergan means by functional collaboration.¹⁴

II. Ramblings Round the Core Question.

Obviously, I would wish that a resolution about the importance of chapter 5 of *Insight* be discussed, and this within the capacities of those present: many of whom are baffled by the chapter. Already I have noted how it baffled me, and still does in its subtleties, despite years of mathematics and physics.

And this middle section baffles me in the possibilities of rambling. Chapter five of *Insight* is the bridge over which existentialism has to move to solve the problem left by Merleau-Ponty and identified by Renaud Barbaras.¹⁵ Chapter five is the bridge to the fourth stage of meaning that would lift Catherine of Siena's fourth-stage identification

¹⁴The question was faced by the group at the Halifax Lonergan conference of 2009. The result was the founding of **SGEME**, the Society for the Globalization of Effective Methods of Evolving. The approach of the group is elementary: a committed acknowledgment of implementation as essential to metaphysics was the minimal requirement for membership. Cultivation of that by some members would lead naturally to an evident, and clearly needed, division of the labour of metaphysics into two complementing activities. The activity of implementation is to blossom eventually into the fuller divisions invented by Lonergan. On the society and its progress, see <http://www.sgeme.org/> For membership information, contact Bob Henman: rohenman50@hotmail.com

Bridgepoise 8, to follow in September, will pursue further the topic of initiating functional collaboration, and indeed bring out the dependance, in effectiveness, of the resolution **Bridgepoise 5** on that initiation: but that is a larger and subtler topic best left till we see what emerges from the June 26th meeting. *Bridgepoise* 9, in December, will bring up the core problem of ontic and phyletic growth of meaning that is the fuller issue to be faced regarding a communal reaching for our luminously heuristic place in the next billion years. *Bridgepoises* 6 and 7, to follow immediately here in June, are outreaches of the functional specialty Communications in regard to the slow emergence of a science of economics.

¹⁵See Renaud Barbaras, *The Being of the Phenomenon. Merleau-Ponty's Ontology*, translated from the French by T.Toadvine and L.Lawlor, Indiana University Press, 2004.

of the bridge, Jesus, into a post-modern spirituality.¹⁶ Gauge Theory - the standard model blossoming¹⁷ - drives in the right direction, but it needs an ABC¹⁸ underpinning meshed with a correct view of energy to get the infoldings¹⁹ of families of particles into hetararchic²⁰ and hierarchic orders. *Insight* on “Space and Time” is desperately needed in physics to rescue it from the refined muddles on non-standard physics that are rampant in varieties of string theory, muddles that mesh with commonsense’s reach for comic cosmic twists of outlandish imagination. And so on, into more remote regions e.g. of cerebral chemodynamics in therapy, of biomimicry in industrial economics.

But more proximate rambles are necessary and also comforting, for the previous paragraph is beyond the talent of most of the present generation of Lonergan students, whereas what is to be done in this next decade - towards 2020 vision - is not, and obviously cannot be if we are to tackle effectively the shift. So: the proximate ramble I suggest is an honest ramble - perhaps best done privately - round three pages of

¹⁶I am referring to *The Dialogues* of Catherine. See Philip McShane, “The Fourth Stage of Meaning: Essay 44 of the Series Field Nocturnes Cantower”, *Meaning and History in Systematic Theology. Essays in Honor of Robert M. Doran, S.J.*, edited by John D. Dadosky, Marquette University Press, 2009.,

¹⁷See Lochlainn O’Raifeartaigh, *The Dawning of Gauge Theory*, Princeton University Press, 1997.

¹⁸See the final note in Chapter 11 of Pierrot Lambert and Philip McShane, *Bernard Lonergan. His Life and Leading Ideas*, Axial Publishing, 2010, for leads on the problem of the ABC exercise in *Insight*. The book is referred to below as **Lambert-McShane**.

¹⁹Section 4 of Chapter 10 of **Lambert-McShane** deals with the notion of energy. The full meaning of *infolding* is a massive heuristic of finitude’s structuring all the way to an everlasting infolding of prime matter within the trinitarian circumincessions.

²⁰I borrow the word *hetararchy* from neurodynamics, where there is consideration of the brain as a modular distributed system, a complex non-linear hierarchy for which W.S. McCulloch invented the name *hetararchy* in “A hetararchy of values determined by the topology of nervous nets”, *Bulletin of Mathematics and Biophysics*, (1945) **7**, 89-93. See notes 8 and 17 above. I am suggesting that the global geometry of the lowest level may not reach the simple unification sought by some physicists.

Lonergan's *Complete Works*: CWL 6, 121 and 155, and CWL 10, 145.

I see no point in detailing that ramble round the topic of *haute vulgarization*. Nor is there much point in pushing into the explanatory meaning of d^2s / dt^2 .²¹ Nor is there much point in considering the mess in present school education in mathematics, physics, economics, a mess that cripples in subtle ways the arts and the sciences of humanity.²² At all events, we cannot deal with that mess without e.g. overcoming our fears of the simple explanatory meaning of d^2s / dt^2 . Appealing to the "commonsense contributions of Augustine, Descartes, Pascal and Newman to one's self-knowledge,"²³ or various contemporary "big names" is just not enough, is indeed a blind alley for the next generation. Almost all of these contemporary "big names" are trapped in "pseudometaphysical mythmaking"²⁴: but who can blame them, since they have not seriously read or heard Lonergan's appeal.

The issue is, have we heard that appeal? It would seem not.

This absence of follow-up on the appeal of *Insight* is difficult to ingest, to accept, to respond to: so we are at the heart of the present appeal. The Rome period, 1953-1965, was a killer for Lonergan in many grim ways.²⁵ He was still energized in the Summer of 1954 when he wrote to Fred Crowe: "The Method in Theology is coming into perspective. For the Trinity: Imago Dei in homine and proceed to the limit as in evaluating $[1 + 1/n]^{nx}$ as n approaches infinity. For the rest: ordo universi. From the viewpoint of theology, it is a manifold of unities developing in relation to one another

²¹But there is point in noting that without that understanding **emergent probability**, central to Lonergan's view of history, is just a very vague linguistic gesture.

²²*Bridgepoise* 3 is a context here: "Liberal Arts as the Core of Future Science."

²³*Method in Theology*, 261.

²⁴*Insight*, 528.

²⁵His early period in Rome was, of course, no great theoretic lift. Symbolic of his dark climb is the letter of 1935 to his Provincial, reproduced fully, as Image 22, in **Lambert-McShane**.

and in relation to God .”²⁶ In the mid-1970s he could still take his stand on his life’s bent - recall Crowe’s remark above²⁷ - when he replied to the question of how much science a theologian should know, “Well, he should be able to read Lindsay and Margenau.”²⁸ But in the year’s between he took a battering from the pressure of his audiences’ heart-and-head captivity by *haute vulgarization*, and when he came to writing book-large his *Gregorianum* essay on functionality, he hovered in a depressed realism: “What am I to do? I can’t put all of *Insight* into the first chapter of *Method*!”²⁹

Method in Theology emerged, a lightweight descriptive flawed introduction to the dynamics of functionality that has indeed little to say about the weave of that functioning. That certainly is a provocative statement: our ramble in the shallows leaves us looking out to sea. But I have been making that provocative point for forty years now, in books and *Cantowers*, and rather than getting into the idiocy of compacting I end by noting that, as it happens, a plethora of new data has been provided this week by the European Collider to the applause of the control room communities around the world. The data is to be read, and the reading will be from the fullness of the Standard Model. A plethora of data is being provided globally this Holy Week of 2010. Lonergan, with Ortega y Gasset, longed for a community that might read it in 10,000 villages, a community with a Standard Heuristic named *metaphysics* by Lonergan, a community talked of by the Spaniard as a “Faculty of Culture”, a global care described by me as a “Tower of Able.”³⁰ Ortega y Gasset’s comments are a decent

²⁶I quote from a letter of Lonergan to Fr.Fred Crowe in May 1954, which Fred kindly made available to me in the 1960s. The quotation is presented as typed.

²⁷At note 6.

²⁸The remark came in a question period of a 1970s workshop in Boston, “Theology as Public Discourse”.

²⁹A remark of Lonergan to me in the late 1960s about the difficulty of tackling the book.

³⁰This is the final “Image of Lonergan” of chapter 9 of **Lambert-McShane**, to be supplemented by the final image of the Epilogue there.

place to conclude my ramble:

“The need to create sound syntheses and systematizations of knowledge, to be taught in the ‘Faculty of Culture,’ will call out a kind of scientific genius which hitherto has existed only as an aberration: the genius for integration. Of necessity this means specialization, as all creative effort inevitably does; but this time, the man will be specialized in the construction of the whole. The momentum which impels investigation to dissociate indefinitely into particular problems, the pulverization of research, makes necessary a compensative control - as in any healthy organism - which is to be furnished by a force pulling in the opposite direction, constraining centrifugal science in a wholesome organization.

Men endowed with this genius come nearer being good professors than those who are submerged in their research.”³¹

We need not be geniuses to be good professors now. We need to be genuine learners and humble pointers, for the next generation, to the task we neglected in our time.

III Limp Leight

Some groans about my title here, no doubt! And perhaps deeper groans at my suggestions of resolutions to be considered at that meeting after the Boston Workshop 2010.

Have you figured out the meaning of the title? Limp points to the implementation that is normatively part of metaphysics as Lonergan conceives it: so: Lonergan- Implementation. Leight? It refers certainly to that well-known comment in the Epilogue of *Insight* about being breathless and late (733[755]). But the odd spelling points to a late taking up of the eighth specialty. The title, then, relates to a strategy of getting towards specialization by noting, and making practical, that there are two quite

³¹José Ortega y Gasset, *Mission of the University*, translated with an Introduction by Howards Lee Nostrand, Princeton University Press, 1944, 91.

identifiable different functions connected with metaphysics: [1] conceiving and affirming; [2] implementing. This is pretty clear from the book *Insight*, the focus of which is on the practical effects of the colossal effort of Lonergan. It is the focus that gave rise to the society SGEME that emerged from the Halifax Meeting of 2009 (see <http://www.sgeme.org/>). And it certainly could be related to resolutions taken by the Boston gathering.

But my interest here is in proposing for consideration a single resolution. The proposal brings us back to where I began, with Crowe's bluntness, and it adds one key element to his suggestions, the element that is most bluntly discomforting when it is named Bridgepoise 5.

It seems best to plunge forward immediately to the suggested resolution:

Bridgepoise 5: That those interested in promoting Lonergan's work take seriously, within their own capacity, Lonergan's suggestion of the first paragraph of chapter five of *Insight*.

Taking seriously? My ramblings in part two may help here: there is a wide range of possible seriousnesses, depending on where one is at in philosophy or theology, what one's interests are, whether one is a teacher or a student. But the seriousness that I would have associated with the resolution here, and in the discussion of it, is the seriousness with which we meet our obligation to get the next generation to take seriously the challenge of doing a little physics. Such a seriousness would lead us, as teachers, to learn with that generation as best we can, but certainly to invite the students to get out of that destructive zone of *haute vulgarization* in which "they are lost in some

no man's land between the world of theory and the world of common sense.”³²

³²Lonergan, “Time and Meaning,” *CWL* 6, University of Toronto Press, 1996, 121. I return now to the invitation mentioned in the first footnote above. Many, indeed most of us, are just not up to the pointing or the climbing that is the direction of the boldface resolution in section III. I would ask those to consider the other direction mentioned in that footnote. Curiously, it fits in with the text above on the land between common sense and theory. Lonergan's economics points towards the beginning of a strange democratic economics, something that is to lace theory into common sense. But I do not wish to get into that deep topic here. I merely appeal to Lonergan students to align themselves with that hope by taking seriously my grade 12 class on the massive shift that Lonergan seeds. It is available in various places: chapter one of *Sane Economics and Fusionism*; Prehumous 1, “Teaching Highschool Economics. A Common-Quest Manifesto”; *Field Nocturnes CanTower* 46: “An Effective Strategy of Economic Reform”. The previous *Bridgepoise* gives the task a fuller context, and points to a volume (August, 2010) of the Journal *Divyadaan*, published in Nashik (near Mumbai) in India, where I lecture this September for three days on the precise topic of *Prehumous* 1. [See *Bridgepoise* 6 for the schedule]. I can make the sketch of that three days available to anyone interested. What is clear to me after four decades of economics is that very few glimpse the fact that Lonergan **INVENTED** economic science in 100 pages of the 1944 typescript. The invention was way beyond the talent of 20th century economics; it is way beyond present orientations. What am I asking for here? Simply that the single grade 12 class be taken seriously, and made a topic: as I said at the end of the previous *Bridgepoise*, twisting a Christian hymn, “Go, Tell it to the Mounties”, or to the White House, or to the Sztarovinchin.