

## FuSe 10

### Contexts of Functional Interpretation

This second seminar is quite a challenge but recall my “old” adage, “if something is worth doing it is worth doing badly.”<sup>1</sup> What is the challenge here? The challenge is that we meet head-on the problem of the *acquis*, the mindset, the *Weltanschauung*, that only slowly emerged in the first seminar. It was there all the time, of course, but in our puttering performance of functional research we managed to cover it up, except for some astute members who messed with our minds by calling attention to it, regularly because they had some background in science so that the analogy of science that Lonergan draws attention to in the first pages of *Method* hit home harder for them. The physics researcher could get on the trail of a serious anomaly in the data only if he or she had the mindset of the **Standard Model** scoping the data. Back to that issue in section 3 below.

I divide my guide to the seminar into seven sections. You need not tackle these section in sequence. So, if you wish to get a glimpse of where the seminar is going, you might skip to the final two sections for a naming of the goings-on of the ten weeks. Add section 5 if you wish to get a heart-flash of the problem, and section 4 if you want to get a glimpse of the context of the solution.

But let me start from section 1, which gives the full context of this seminar as one of 25 that are to occupy us in the next six years. Us? Each seminar is to be chosen on its own, and the participation can be active or merely observational. More on that in section 1. Section 2, titled “cumulative and progressive results,” poses the broad context of the challenge you and I face if we are to get a glimpse of the global future of that

---

<sup>1</sup>A remark of the late 1970s with which I entertained Fred Crowe. His own slogan-question was, “What Functional Specialty are you working in?” Later there emerged Tom Halloran’s neat nudge, “to whom are you talking?”

phrase from the beginning of *Method in Theology*.<sup>2</sup> Section 3, with the odd symbolic title, **FS + UV + GS**, gets us to the beginning on the analogy with a glimpse of chemistry and its periodic table and of sick dogs. Section 4, titled “Meaning and Ongoing Meaning,” gives a feel for the messy problems ahead, much as an initial messing and mixing in a chemistry laboratory takes one away from the simplicity of the periodic table. The fifth section gets to the key problem of this seminar: how are we to sublimate the two accounts of Interpretation given by Lonergan into an effective collaborative structure of what is to be eventually a mature science. From there we pass, in section 6, to the simpler business of each of us picking a manageable project, seven of us being committed to a precise following through in a brief essay on our achievement. Section 7 deals with the practicalities of how we go about all this in our ten-week collaboration, ending with a vision of where this is to climb to serious effective maturity in, perhaps, 9011 A.D.

### 1. **The 25 Seminars: structure and scheduling**<sup>3</sup>

Questions have come up about the list I posted regarding a full series of 25 seminars. So I’ll give a further perspective on the task here, even at the risk of a little repetition.

First, then, the length of the seminars, and some comments on procedure: at the end I add datings of the seminars.

Think in units of eight: the first eight, on General Categories; the second eight, on Special Christian Categories; the third eight, on Global Revelatory Categories. The final seminar is just a pointer to eschatological categories.

The first seminar is slightly longer - a full three months - and seemingly more complex than the others. All the other seminars involve three supporting *FuSe* essays and only

---

<sup>2</sup>It occurs in plain on page 4, in italics on page 5. In future I do not intend to reference it.

<sup>3</sup>I leave this section as it was originally produced: footnotes are inbuilt.

one exercise/attempt, and they each run about ten weeks. This first seminar runs 13 weeks - three months - and has more exercises, and more *FuSe* essays connected with it. The supporting essays of this first seminar are *FuSe* zero, 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. [*Fuse* 2 belongs in the second and third seminars, on Interpretation and History].

This first seminar was, in a sense, the most difficult: a culture shock. The nature of this shock is in my previous posting that introduced *FuSe* 5. What is being revealed [I mean, if the exercise is digested, ingested!] is a massive shift of culture, eventually a global mind-life towards care of humanity's future. "If men are to meet the challenge set by major decline and its longer cycle, it will be through their culture that they do so" (*Insight*, 261) and the result of the cultural shift is to be "too universal to be bribed, too impalpable to be forced, too effective to be ignored" (*Ibid.*, 265).

What the 25 seminars aim at is the beginning of the climb to this new methodological culture. But it is not just a Tower culture, but a culture of the byways of ordinary living. [That fuller problem of culture is raised in the first section of *Insight* chapter 17]. So - and here we point to the enriching reach of our first seminar's efforts - the mood and mode of common sense is to be allied and aligned with functional research. We, seven billion of us, are called to cultivate, culturature, ourselves and our perhaps endless (a goodly Godly question, this) descendants. Can one get this mood into one's neurodynamics through this seminar? Only by prolonging it to a ten-year project [recall Camus: "it takes ten years to get an idea"; or recall the old Zen story about getting to enlightenment in a hurry!]

SO: any one seminar gives any of us enough to ingest in this decade. And some of you may well call a halt in regard to other seminars. You have the pointings already in one or two towards the foundation of the Leaning Tower of Able.

There will be fresh e-faces in the next seminar and the next, and so on. The condition of doing the work of any of those other seminars is that the effort of the first seminar is somehow ingested. The *FuSe* series, starting with *FuSe* Zero, has to be brooded over freshly - recall Proust - in the first month, as we climb into *Fuse* 10, 13, .....

(10 + 3.n) ... 79. Then, as you see, all the other seminars have a simpler structure, to which I will return shortly.

However, you who were in it see better now, perhaps, the significance of that first seminar's struggles? Especially the struggle towards the fantasy of a Tower Community of a quarter of a billion people in a later millennium.

But we began small, in our fantasy around "The Rolling Stone Gathers Nomos". We began with the problems of a family's dysfunctional holidays of 20 years, but "for 20 years you may substitute 20 centuries, or 20 million years: Grandma Moses [in the story] is a bow both to remote Africa and to proximate Middle Eastern origins." (*A Brief History of Tongue*, 104; *Economics for Everyone*, 152). And all the seminars have to share that beginning.

What we pick up on, in each of the seminars, is the "Existential Gap" (See CWL 18), as it manifests itself **in that zone**, in the contrast between a muddle and a model, between the muddling along of present Lonergan studies, and the effort to generate a later sound global science "yielding cumulative and progressive results" (*Method*, 4), "yielding cumulative and progressive results" (*Method*, 5).

Obviously, I would like people to stay with me, with us, as identified, or unidentified, observers. New folks will sign in, burdened with ingesting (somewhat) this first seminar's pointings. But, as well as this challenge, and the reduction of **Attempts** to one only, there is a further strategic element, necessary to effective progress. It is that some selected and self-selected active contributors make that **Attempt** on a definite topic: an essay of perhaps 8 dense pages -two may do the trick! - to be made public in *FuSes* 11, 14, ... (11 + 3.n) ... 76. [That publicity itself may discourage some who may not want "to lay all his [her] cards on the table," {*Method*, 193} since a doctorate or a job in enemy territory may be at stake ; or whatever]. The process will vary from seminar to seminar, as will the size of the core group and the topic(s): a loose condition being that it would seem better that the group had been in a previous seminar. So: there is to be a core group doing determinate work under my

guidance. Further it seem necessary to me now to limit active participants to 25 members and - alas, to ask for a fee of \$40 or its equivalent.<sup>4</sup>

I had best halt, though there has come up the topic of one zone of difficulty that deserves some comment: about collaboration within such a common model and the flow of other models, muddles. People are puzzled by this “cumulative and progressive” idea when they view current debates and discussions of Lonergan studies. The sad fact is that many of these debates are pre-scientific, richly descriptive, comparative. We might think through the dynamics of pre-scientific physics or chemistry, but that would require too much elaboration. I will only suggest that we think broadly of a decently advance physics or cosmology for which neither the earth nor space-time is flat. Those doing this physics do not have discussions with the Flat Earth Society. Physics works on, within both its at-the-time standard model and its focus on the real situations discovered and improved: not, then, on the variety of unverified models or opinions, however sophisticated. But I sense as I write that what is needed here is not a paragraph but a book, or rather, here, the adventure of 25 seminars! Still, it is best not just to await the new data from this experimentation - “the process of experimentation yields new data” (Method, 5) - so I tackle, in the second part of *FuSe10*, a lengthier reflection on the anomalous phrase (as used of philosophy and theology), “cumulative and progressive results.”

## 2. Cumulative and Progressive Results

Near the conclusion of section 1, posted on the **Blog**, January 28<sup>th</sup>, there was a paragraph on the topic which ending by pointing to the need for a book, and the small stab at the topic to be attempted here.

---

<sup>4</sup>Active basically means in dialogue throughout with me. The first seminar was quite a juggle for me, with other tutorial commitments. The fee is added because I realize now that earnings from last year of \$3000 dollars from local tutoring just isn't on if I am to keep up the seminar, yet the dollars are needed to supplement my wee pension, so covering a piece of my rent! Non-active membership, of course, goes on: the BLOG is there to be read.

But where to begin? I am back at that old question of Lonergan to me in the mid-1960s, as he fretted over his starting *Method in Theology*: he couldn't figure out how to locate the book in relation to *Insight*. I recall his puzzling being on my mind as I tackled the index late in 1971.<sup>5</sup>

One handling of the locating of *Insight* comes out bluntly on pages 286-7 of *Method*. Not just the list of (9) zones to be ingested, but the very clear nudge in the paragraph running from line 18 to line 23 of page 287. I can sense him leaning into his little typewriter, at home, homing in on a sort-of remnant of the follow-up volume to *Insight* that he had intended in 1952.<sup>6</sup> But did he have tongue in cheek? Was he annoyed? Certainly he was tired, solitary, drinking too much. What had puzzled him, as he talked to me in 1966, was what to do about the enrichment that was *Insight*. Chapter one has that sad little note, note 9, asking us to "please observe" the brevity, the inadequacy, the need for "a struggle with some such book as *Insight*." The egg is there, unhatched, in the nest, in the interested readers' minding. "**One** can go on ..., "<sup>7</sup> where the **one** is Lonergan in 1953. Realistically, in 1966, Lonergan could not go on to write the big book nesting in this paragraph, "a far larger one"<sup>8</sup> than *Insight*. Indeed, when I look back at his request in 1966 for advice, I think I might well have said - but I did not have the confidence or the wisdom at the time - "Bernie, don't write a book at all: The Greg article is enough."

But now I find myself in a somewhat parallel position, in my eightieth year, and not, as he was then, a tired 62. I look back at the mess that emerged from the reading -

---

<sup>5</sup>See the text below, between note 6 and note 8.

<sup>6</sup>He expressed this in a letter to Eric O'Connor. The letter is reproduced in Pierrot Lambert and Philip McShane, *Bernard Lonergan: His Life and Leading Ideas*, Axial Publishing, 2010, 156. The proposed title of the second volume was "Faith, or Insight and Faith".

<sup>7</sup>*Method in Theology*, 287.

<sup>8</sup>*Insight*, 754.

or rather mis-reading - of the book. "Cumulative and progressive results"? The emerging of "a broadened basis"? A grip on the globe "on the level of ones' times ... at home in modern science"?<sup>9</sup> "If one does not attain, on the level of one's age, an understanding of the religious realities in which one believes, one will be simply at the mercy of the psychologists, the sociologists, the sociologists, the philosophers, that will not hesitate to tell believers what it really is in which they believe."<sup>10</sup>

Well, we - Lonergan's followers - have not attained, or even attempted, that broad-based self-characterization of meaning that would give common meaning a nest.<sup>11</sup> We could not, cannot, "go on" as that great paragraph nudged. We were dealing with an evolutionary sport. Nor do I think that the sport was unaware - the deepest sense of that word - of this as he typed the phrase "one can go on": he had gone on alone. But let us listen again, fresh focused, to his dancing fingers Yo-Yo-Ma-ing our neural cell-strings, locked as they are likely to be in stale chemical patterns of an axial super-ego.<sup>12</sup>

"From such a broadened basis one can go on to a developed account of the human good, values, beliefs, to the carriers, elements, functions, realms, and stages of

---

<sup>9</sup>*Method in Theology*, 350.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 351.

<sup>11</sup>I refer implicitly to sections 1 and 2 of *Method*, chapter 14, and my too-familiar talk of character as mentioned in section 1.

<sup>12</sup>This subtle issue, raised by me in *Humus 2*, "Vis Cogitativa: Contemporary Defective Patterns of Anticipation" is treated by Bill Zanardi both in the first seminar and in the second. The nudge came from a letter from Lonergan to Crowe, December 27<sup>th</sup> 1955, quoted at the beginning of *Humus 2*, but worth repeating here. "Incidentally, re anxiety, what the Freudians call the Super-Ego is Aquinas' cogitativa: just as the little birds know that twigs are good for building nests and the little lambs know that wolves are bad, so little human beings develop a cogitativa about good and bad; it reflects their childish understanding of what papa and mamma say is good or bad and in adult life it can cause a hell of a lot of trouble." Only recently did I begin to see its effects on axial prayer. Foundational Prayer is treated without that insight in *Prehumus* 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

meaning, to the question of God, of religious experience, its expressions, its dialectic development."<sup>13</sup>

The issue is the Everest, ever unresting, broadened basis mapped in the list of the (9) just given, raised nicely to the status of ten commandments by the inclusion of a (10), which could have expressed briefly the challenge "put the genesis and blossoming of those (9) into the cyclic dynamic of functional collaboration."

But the genius of the tenth commandment here is its strategy of twisting the Mosaic 10<sup>th</sup>: it answers the question of how we, HOW-stumbling gorillas in the myst,<sup>14</sup> are to covet adequately the emergent goods of finitude. Not **it**, but **we**, and eventually a we, towering flatly<sup>15</sup> on the plane of the common uncommon meaning of 10 billion, a quarter of a billion strong, stabilizing<sup>16</sup> the longer cycles of incline in leveling towards "cumulative and progressive results." And the further, but proximate, genius of the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment is that it can solve the problem of the failed - or should I say statistically slowed-down? - following of the sport. The slow-down is due to the discontinuous uniqueness of the leap to a boggling Standard Model; the solution is a shift of statistics from Poisson to Bell not just through recycling laws, but through in-built substructures of that recycling.

Here I am at a loss similar to Lonergan's bewilderment of 1966: the previous paragraph is somewhat like that footnote 9 of *Method* chapter 1. The thesis, the nest, the egg, the egging on, is a claim that the standard model, a global omnidisciplinary multicultural business, is to be spun out and forward by the dynamics of the tenth

---

<sup>13</sup>*Method*, 287.

<sup>14</sup>See the concluding paragraph of this essay.

<sup>15</sup>The Tower image (see the Lonergan biography of note 6 above, at page 163) is obviously just that.

<sup>16</sup>*FuSe* 6 and *FuSe* 7 make the case for the name **Lobbyism** for the operative meaning of this the community of positive stabilization: the name does not matter: the effective envisioning of the successful global incline is the issue.

commandment. But how do I share this view? Might I parallel Lonergan's talk of *Insight* by talking of my struggle in my seventies with the 117 Cantowers?<sup>17</sup>

### 3. FS + UV + GS<sup>18</sup>

Do not take fright at the odd symbolization of the Standard Model: here it simply names the problem up front. What the seminar aims at is getting us some measure of nominal control over it. We regularly use the **Standard Model** of physics as a decent analogue since it goes by that name, but we will try to appeal more to the standard model of chemistry here, familiar to us all from popular culture if not from the later years of school. So now, think of how that model, The Periodic Table, turns up inside the front cover in many school texts. **FS + UV + GS** is our cover story.

The first helpful thing to notice is that the standard model of physics or chemistry is incomplete. It is incomplete, not in the ways physicists talk about incompleteness.<sup>19</sup> It is incomplete in so far as the questions, "What is physics?", "What does physics deal with?", needs a larger answer than the usual standard model. There is a ferment towards that larger answer that I don't wish to enter into here, but I would

---

<sup>17</sup>The 117 *Cantowers* emerged as a million-word project in 2002 from my work of Ezra Pound's 117 *Cantos*. The series was complicated by a pause after the 41<sup>st</sup> *Cantower*, which led to another beginning in 41 *Field Nocturnes*. These two converged in the continuation of the enterprise as *Field Nocturnes CanTower*, running on from *FNC* 42 to *FNC* 117. An ordering and description of the set of essays - some 1,500,000 words - is given in *FNC* 43, "The Full Cantower Series".

<sup>18</sup>I break here with my usual order of these symbols - UV + GS + FS - which is in the order of Lonergan's discovery of these pieces.

<sup>19</sup>The topic **incompleteness** is a massively important one for future methodology, and the incompleteness of the present account of the fundamental forces is only a fringe issue in it. Closer to the heart of the matter is the work of Goedel (see the lengthy chapter 1, "Goedel's Incompleteness Theorem," of my website book of 2008, *Lonergan's Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry*). The statement of the position in *Insight* 413 requires the addition of various axioms, including a set of incompleteness axioms to deal both with pilgrim thinking and with eschatological dynamics.

note that the ferment is general for pretty-well all zones of human interest, and this leads to a strategically neat way of talking about functional collaboration with all such zones.

One point of that strategy and ferment is worth taking hold of: one can think of **FS** as prior even to the discovery of the “simple” system of experience, understanding and judgment. **FS** can be seen then, historically, of leading to that discovery.<sup>20</sup>

What is **FS**? It can be described in ten minutes, as Lonergan did it with his eight fingers for me in 1966, but it is well to bear in mind that the answer to the question is to emerge slowly.<sup>21</sup> But let us assume that we have enough of a “cover story” from our reading of chapter 5 of *Method in Theology*.

Next we have **UV**, universal viewpoint. There is a substantial literature on the topic, into which I cannot go here.<sup>22</sup> My effort is to draw attention to the problem in an elementary fashion, and I do so by talking about the story of a sick plant or a sick dog. You might think it better for me to start with a healthy plant or dog, but there is method in my method. Completely healthy creatures are, you might say, an ideal type, something that relates to Genetic Systematics. **UV**, or better, **TUV** - the inclusion of T

---

<sup>20</sup>Chapter one of *Method in Theology: Revisions and Implementations*, my Website book of 2008, deals with this emergence: history as the mother, and Lonergan the foster-father, of functional collaboration.

<sup>21</sup> The fundamental pointer in that issue is chapter 10 of *Method in Theology: Revisions and Implementations*. The title of the chapter is “Metaphysical Equivalents and Functional Specialization”. We need the reality of the needed differentiations of consciousness and operations before we can talk a serious heuristics of them.

<sup>22</sup>In preparing these seminar topics, there was simply no way to add in details of the struggles of other Lonergan scholars in, or towards, the various areas of specialization. Here, however, I would draw attention to Ivo Coelho’s pushes, both in his book, *Hermeneutics and Method. The ‘Universal Viewpoint’ in Bernard Lonergan*, (University of Toronto Press, 2001) and in his centennial article, “Implementations of Lonergan’s Method: A Critique”, *Divyadaan* 15( 2004). On Coelho’s book, and the thesis (1994) from which it emerged, see *Cantower* 12, “A Problem of Interpretation Emerges” and *Cantower* 13, “Functional Specialization and Chapters 17 and 18 of *Insight*.” On the ethical imperative of such collaboration see section 3 of *Cantower* 18, “The Possibility of Cultural Ethics”.

for **tentative**, nudges us to think empirically - points us towards facticity. You may think that I am wandering away here from the high normativity of *Insight*, but what is killing us is precisely that powerful high normativity: pause, for instance of what you think or have to say about *Pure Formulation* as a topic!

So let us rather think in homely fashion about the story of the sick dog, and then the study of the stories of the aggregate of sick dogs.<sup>23</sup> And let us get closer to scientific studies by thinking of **genetic systematics**: the **GS** of my formula for a Standard Model. Scientific study of animals heads primarily for a genetic account: the vet is more interested in disorientations. But if the only animals available for study are, so to speak, animals with normal ups-and-downs, then you have to conjure with what you arrive at in order to get the genetic account. If you are with me here, then you are not surprised when I note that what we are heading for is a lead into notions of the history of ideas, of history with its battered story of the realisation of ideas,<sup>24</sup> of genetic ideas as somehow a sequencing of complexes of ideas, and so on. But what is important is the *and so on* as inviting you to glimpse the problem of that *and so on*.

Mentioning my struggle with all this is a help. It was a struggle that became serious in the 1970s, although genetic botany had been my second option for a doctorate

---

<sup>23</sup>My analogy is quite loose of course: the reader may think of a definite variety of plant or animal. Useful on botany there is the 1970 Florida Conference paper, "Image and Emergence; Towards an Adequate *Weltanschauung*", available on the website as chapter one of *The Shaping of the Foundations*; chapter three of the same work deals with "Zoology and the Future of Philosophers."

<sup>24</sup>"History with its battered story of the realisation of ideas": I skim past this phrase, knowing that it is a bookful. Well, certainly it is enough to keep us going through several seminars. I was tempted to enlarge here on "the reversal of counterpositions" in relation to the genesis of genetic system, starting with the sick plant as source of understanding the healthy plant, but as, you note immediately, we cannot be "bolder spirits. They select the conspicuously successful science of their time" on the topic, since no science is conspicuously successful in dealing with genetic development, much less dialectic development. All I can hope for here is that my skimpy cover story nudges you to at least push the analogy descriptively, thus finding how GS, fermented from UV - the analogue for which is the account of the stages of the sick dog or plant - offers a control within the standard model. The next note should help a little.

thesis in 1965. It was in the late 1970s, as I recall, when I broke through to thinking of *pure formulations* in these terms, and of theological systematics in terms of a genetics of systems.<sup>25</sup> In section 5 I shall enter into other aspects of this climb, an unfinished climb,<sup>26</sup> but perhaps pointing to a single recent adventure would help. I mentioned above the “sequencing of complexes of ideas”, but now think again of the growing plant, and think of Lonergan’s dense brilliant paragraph that begins with “Study of the organism begins ...”<sup>27</sup> Not too many of us, I surmise, have battled seriously with that paragraph. I did so myself over the years, starting seriously in 1963, till finally I decided a few years ago to write about the paragraph in a suggestive manner. The writing ran to 41 essays, the *Field Nocturnes*: a tough enough venture and tough to follow in that I wished to generate a broad notion of the relevance of the paragraph. The startling thing about the paragraph is that it is only a warm up to the genetic problem. We are invited to tackle the organism from the point of view of “the higher system as integrator.”<sup>28</sup> But next we are nudged to tackle the issue of the genetic operator and “the difficulty in studying the operator lies in the complexity of its data.”<sup>29</sup> Indeed! And it is a difficulty that blocks botany and zoology in a spectrum of ways. Part one of the book *Method in Theology: Revisions and Implementations*, titled “Method in Theology and Botany,” pauses over some of those difficulties. The troublesome fact is that genetic systematics is

---

<sup>25</sup>The break-through is still fresh in my memory: reading the text of *De Intellectu et Methodo* brought me to the startling lift of the passage on the competence required of a historian of mathematics: mastery of mathematics’ genetics. The relevant text is too long to reproduce here, but it is available in *Cantower 7*, “Systematic and General Systems Theory”, at note 29, in the translation of Michael Shield (1990), “Understanding and Method”, 130-32. In the original Latin text it is on page 55.

<sup>26</sup>My most recent shot at the heuristics of explanatory hermeneutics is *FuSe 2* of the present series.

<sup>27</sup>*Insight*, 489.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, 491.

outside the vision of present biology except as a spontaneous searching, a hit and miss business that is battered by reductionism, mechanism, information theory, what have you. When is sophisticated genetic biology going to emerge?

But our question here is, when are we going to get the larger heuristic standard model to give us a control of ongoing meaning?

#### 4. Meaning and Ongoing Meaning

The rambles of these next three sections, and our follow up in the seminar, should help with getting a better grip on what Lonergan claims when he talks of a growth that “occurs only slowly, and usually, only through a struggle with some such book as *Insight*.”<sup>30</sup> I am setting the stage for the long struggle that begins with these next two seminars, at the heart of which is some tentative distinction between functional interpretation and functional history. What do you think of the title of this section as a candidate for such a distinction? Pause please, eyes off the page!

Are you suspicious of the linking of meaning with what is sought in interpretation, and ongoing meaning with what is sought in history? And well you might be. Is not all energy-embedded meaning ongoing, and is not all ongoing meaning meaning, and is not eschatological meaning, - a step, perhaps, beyond history - to be ongoing and energy-embedded? So I write here, ongoing against Lonergan as he talks of the concrete intelligibility of space and time, “The answer is easily reached,” not.<sup>31</sup> The two functional tasks, interpretation and history, are an ongoing struggle of humanity to glimpse the ongoing genesis of historical intelligibility of space and time in

---

<sup>30</sup>*Method in Theology*, 7, note 9.

<sup>31</sup>*Insight*, 195. [I am thinking of that old chestnut, “the word-order in German sentences is easy, not”] There are many such laughs in *Insight*: who does the easy reaching? But I would draw attention to the fact that the paragraph that begins here is the last paragraph on the topic of the “bridge” (*Insight*, 163) to human studies, and the challenge of explanatory human studies is to reach for meaning within a decent explanatory heuristic: at least so Lonergan claims in his two canons of explanation (*Insight*, 93, 107-109; 609-610).

a normative fashion, so as to bring forth the concrete reality of history, a generative history. Might I say, then, that we hover here over “the problem of general history, which is the real catch.”?<sup>32</sup>

Anyway, so much for that handy misleading title of this section. Would “ontic meaning and phyletic meaning” be somewhat better? The question that I raise by my muddling along in this short section is a question that is central to these two seminars on functional interpretation and functional history. What you need to do, as we enter this seminar, is to pause over this question to detect if you have an answer, and to detect what kind of answer it is. This parallels the approach to the first seminar’s topic: we struggled performatively with the task of doing functional research, and found out that we were pretty obscure on its dynamics. A similar but deeper struggle is ahead of us here.

### **5. *Method 7 and Insight 17.3***

The title here sums up the struggle of the present seminar by focusing on the problem of reading these two texts. Those who were with me in the first seminar, on functional research, will recognise layers of anomalies. But the newcomers can certainly see that there is a problem. Which text are we to follow in our efforts to do functional interpretation? Or are they subtly related, so that the challenge is to use both? Or is the challenge to sublimate Lonergan’s two efforts into a new heuristics of interpretation?

**Or** : are we somehow plunged into the problem of functional interpretation in that, what is required of us is to pick up on the basic anomaly constituted by the two texts and to grope our way towards talking functionally to our functional historian colleagues so that they would “make the most”<sup>33</sup> of this piece of cycling and recycling

---

<sup>32</sup>*Topics in Education*, 236.

<sup>33</sup>There is a nice little task here of figuring how this connects with reaching “an idealized version of the past, something better than was the reality.” (*Method*, 251). It is helpful to pick up on the clues of section 3 about going from a study of the sick puppy to a view of the healthy

towards “cumulative and progressive results”? The result properly achieved, of course, bumps round the cycle if it is really successful in each function, and - think of  $C_{7,8}$  and  $C_{8,9}$ <sup>34</sup> - hits the streets running, running perhaps all over the map?<sup>35</sup>

If we nurse the idea in that previous paragraph as a program for this seminar we have a start, one quite similar to the start of the previous seminar when groping was the order of the play. We start, as there, at our wit’s end, and by the end of the seminar have a better inkling of the subtle task that is differentiated functional interpretation. I have used parallels with the study of the dog in talking of UV and GS: we could continue with those parallels here, parallels of a “less successful subject”<sup>36</sup> with “no decent models to be imitated.”<sup>37</sup> But I do not wish to so continue. What I wish is that all take the plunge, in so far as they have energy and time, and that the ten active members push towards eight single-spaced pages or so on the topic, intertwined with an effort of self-exposure, “at pains not to conceal their tracks but to lay their cards on the table” - at pains, painfully indeed.<sup>38</sup>

You may thus wish to proceed, with no further help from me, to this task, listed in section 6 below as [a], or to any one of the other tasks in that list.

Or you may wish to ponder over my own struggle with the problem. That struggle in its available expressions is given immediately, beginning with the most

---

puppy.

<sup>34</sup>The related image is available on page 108 of McShane, *A Brief History of Tongue. From Big Bang to Coloured Wholes*, Axial Publishing, 1998.

<sup>35</sup>I am thinking here of the various convenient imagings, talked about in *FuSe 5* and elsewhere, of the sphere of common sense with its geo-historical cones, imagings that sublimate Lonergan’s talk of ongoing, overlapping, etc etc contexts.

<sup>36</sup>*Method in Theology*, 4.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup>Our seminars climb towards this high point of the fourth seminar, the second part of page 250 of *Method*: can you stand standing thus, luminously self-luminous?

recent effort and rambling back through my work, stopping however at my seventieth birthday. I was too young to make much sense of the problem further back. Indeed, I recall my first adventures with the problem of *Insight's* Hermeneutics in 1958: at that stage I knew little more than that Hermeneutics was not an unpopular German.

Here you are then: some doubtful helps to your adventure. I return to the time-range of that adventure in the final seventh section.

*Fuse 2, "Pedagogical Struggling with the Second Canon of Hermeneutics,"* was written out of sequence, but it was intended to be a central element in the struggle of the second and third seminars and beyond. It obviously relates to the fuller, though younger, effort of Fusions 11, 12, and 13, *"Method 7 lifted into Canons and Collaboration" I, II and III.*

Depending on energy, time, etc you might want to venture further back into other related essays of mine, but I leave their listing to the footnote.<sup>39</sup>

To conclude this section I note the larger, fundamental, problem, densely expressed in a quotation from Lonergan and more firmly posed in the third part of the Lonergan biography that I wrote with Pierrot Lambert.<sup>40</sup> It is the problem of *acquis*, the accepted stand, the standard model, *Weltanschauung*, mindset, whatever.

The quotation from Lonergan is one that we have nursed through the first seminar and it needs to be carried forward:

---

<sup>39</sup>Some relevant *Cantowers*: *Cantower 11*, "Lonergan: Interpretation and History"; *Cantower 12*, "A Problem of Interpretation Arises"; *Cantower 13*, "Functional Specialization and Chapters 17 and 18 of *Insight*"; *Cantower 23*, "Redoubt Describing"; *Cantower 34*, "A Few Elementary Pointers regarding Interpretation". Some relevant essays from the later series *SURF*: *Surf 7*, "Lonergan Research as a Functional Specialty"; *Surf 8*, "Functional Collaboration and the Universal Viewpoint"; *Surf 10*, "Stirring Up Research Fragments: The Second Canon of Hermeneutics"; *Surf 12*, "Tackling Lonergan on Interpretation". In chapter nine of *ChrISt in History*, there is a key discussion of the relation of the Canons of Hermeneutics to *The Sketch* given earlier in chapter 17 of *Insight*. Chapters 11 and 12 of the Lonergan Biography by Lambert and McShane also offer useful leads.

<sup>40</sup>Pierrot Lambert and Philip McShane, *Bernard Lonergan. His Life and Leading Ideas*, Axial Publications, 2010.

“You can have teamwork insofar, first of all, as the fact of reciprocal dependence is understood and appreciated. Not only is that understanding required; one has to be familiar with what is called the *acquis*, what has been settled, what no one has any doubt of in the present time. You’re doing a big thing when you can upset that, but you have to know where things stand at the present time, what has already been achieved, to be able to see what is new in its novelty as a consequence.”<sup>41</sup>

The crisis is a crisis of accepted mindset. The present mindset - notwithstanding the claims of some of the Lonergan leadership - is not a shared sound perspective but a vague consensus which is largely commonsense. The science that Lonergan was pushing for, to leave behind “big frogs in little ponds,”<sup>42</sup> was not seeded by his work “You’re doing a big thing when you can upset that”: Lonergan did do a big thing, but it did not upset the old conventions of earlier times. The big thing was his demand of up-to-dateness and a clear shift to explanation, or at least to a luminous heuristics of explanation. The big thing he offered was a standard model that is centuries ahead of present capabilities. *Insight* presented the challenge with decent substance, but circumstances beat him down to readable description when he came to that part of the model that I have named FS in section 4. The title of this section 5 names the resulting anomaly.

## 6. Possible Projects

The members that do not belong to the core group have, of course, the freedom of drifting around the list. But for all there is the challenge of messing a round, finding thus very concretely how difficult it is to write, sentence by sentence, in such a way as leads to **the baton** being nicely transferred to the hand of the functional historian so that that person or persons can keep eyes front, figuring and configuring the shift, large or

---

<sup>41</sup>*CWL* 22, p. 462, from a 1968 essay.

<sup>42</sup>An after-dinner remark of Lonergan 1961 during his visit to Dublin in Easter 1961.

small, in the full story of the health of the dogs of war and peace.

So I give a list of possible topics, but people can find their own problematic zones to interpret. OR they can look back to the first seminar, or to *FuSe 1*, and pick up on an anomaly there. I could have lengthened the list below to include the *FuSe 1* list, but it seems easier to simply refer you to that list, which is given in *FuSe 1* after note 56. There are two lists given there, relating to difficulty, list [a] to [e] and list [1] to [5]. Here, then, is my list of possible topics, marked {a} to {h}

{a} there is the problem of interpretation posed vaguely in section 5. I do not wish to elaborate further to block experimentation: might one text be used to ground the strategy of interpreting the other?

{b} Try interpreting the text of chapter 5 of *Method* functionally to the functional historian.

{c} *For A New Political Economy*, chapter 1, is a great challenge for the functional interpreter's baton exchange to the historian.

{d} One might try a narrower focus, as here in [d], [e], [f]. [d] being the text on generalized emergent probability in the top lines of page 141 of *A Third Collection*.

{e} interpret to a historian that troubling paragraph in the middle of page 287 of *Method*.

{f} There is the deep water of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canon of Hermeneutics. Bring oxygen!

{g} Bill Zanardi hands on to interpreters, from seminar one, a really tough challenge regarding the *vis cogitativa*, the super-ego, and modern neurochemistry. Might you be

the interpreter to suggest a lift of this anomalous zone into a fuller standard model that would be a paradigm-shift problem for the functional historian?

{h} a group of those messing along in functional research homed in on the spread of words on page 48 of *Method*. How might a creative interpreter lift this display of terms into a model-shift that would shake up functional history?

## 7. The Ten-week Struggle

The seminar is scheduled to run from Wednesday, April 27<sup>th</sup> to Tuesday, July 5<sup>th</sup>: ten weeks. How are we to go about this so as to make some progress, “yielding cumulative and progressive results”. Since the cyclic dynamic is not in place, the statistics of that yielding are shabby, like the Poisson frequency distribution of death by mule kicks in the 1914 German army. Since we do not share the mindset of Lonergan, we are, in the main, trapped in a pretty shabby methodological *acquis*. The seminar can help us to sense this Existential Gap<sup>43</sup> and perhaps stop or divert the foolishness of effete descriptive Lonerganism.

How do we go about this in ten weeks? Like Martin Luther King, but not at all on his great level of commitment, I have a dream. I suppose it is somewhat like of my other little dream of one billion half-acre gardens in that it is not quite beyond serious fantasy. One billion half-acre gardens takes up only 1/16 th of the arable land. With massive shifts in nano-technologies, biomimicry, organic chemistry, solar energy availability etc etc , we could begin to move in that direction in the next century. But my other dream is an effective Cosmopolis, where the Tower people live comfortably, aesthetically, in the world of explanation, and mediate life and mystery and freedom to plane and plain meaning. I wonder why so few have taken time to reach for such a view of an effective Cosmopolis, getting beyond the slim heuristic of *Insight* 7.8.6, with the help of functionality, to concretely envisaging a working globe that realizes Lonergan’s

---

<sup>43</sup>See the index of *Phenomenology and Logic*, under *Existential*.

wild hope? Such is my larger dream, to be recalled here as I conclude, but to be operative as we sow seed in these Summer months of 2011.

Ten weeks, then, but for some few the beginning of ten years.

My appeal for this collaborative venture goes out in late March. FuSe 7 has already appeared, with provocative title, “LonerGAN Studies: FuSe or Refuse”: refuse has, conveniently, two pronunciations and two meanings. In that essay I asked, in seminar one, for the taking of a position regarding *acquis*, a personal acknowledgment the gap - one that leans to break the hold of the little pond of accepted putterings, that **leans and longs effectively** to make a fresh start. The fresh start, I would hope, would be primarily a classroom freshness. We desperately need to be honest, in our classes, about our backwardness, having gentle regard for the future of our students and ourselves..

That honesty may emerge from this seminar, and is symbolized by a single paragraph of the second canon of hermeneutics, worth repeating now.

“The explanatory differentiation of the protean notion of being involves three elements. First, there is the generic sequence in which insights gradually are accumulate by man. Secondly, there are the dialectic alternatives in which accumulated insights are formulated, with positions inviting further development and counterpositions shifting their ground to avoid the reversal they demand. Thirdly, with the advance of culture and of effective education, there arises the possibility of the differentiation and specialization of modes of expression; and since this development conditions not only the exact communication of insights but also the discoverer’s own grasp of his discovery, since such grasp and its exact communication intimately are connected with the advance of positions and the reversal of counterpositions, the three elements in the explanatory differentiation of the protean notion of being **fuse into a single explanation.**”<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup>*Insight*, 609-10. The **bold-facing** is mine, nudging you to pause over the shocking challenge of giving rise to a community sharing and radiating that fused inner word with all its

The paragraph lurks in all the suggested undertakings listed in section 6 above. Some of us may push through with some success in their eight page presentation to the rest of us, but I suspect that the main achievement will be a happy exposure of the mess we are in.

Some of us are already there: quite frankly, the goal of understanding *Insight 17.3* has beaten all my efforts in the last 54 years. "We are not there yet. And for society to progress towards that or any other goal it must fulfil one condition. I cannot be a titanothore, a beast with a three-ton body and a ten-ounce brain."<sup>45</sup>

What is going to happen, concretely, when we try these exercises in interpretation? We are to find, self-find, that our *acquis* just does not lend or bend itself to lift our meaning into the explanatory world of either canon of explanation. {How did Lonergan produce that powerful piece in the pressured summer of 1953?!} We are to find, each at our own pace and level, that we are at a serious distance from the beginnings of a science. We have been involved - perhaps invited into persuasively by faulty teaching - in alchemy, not chemistry. This finding is to be a shock, vibrating through the neuromolecules of our axial-superego. I do not wish to add further on the matter here: let's see what the seminar does to us.

The seminar, obviously, can be followed lightly by any observer; but then the effect forecast in the previous paragraph is not to be expected. That effect can be expected in so far as the invitation of the full *FuSe* series is taken at some personal depth. It is the prerequisite of serious seminar work, by no means an effortless task. It may only be one hundred pages of print, but it is a tough climb of adult growth. All each of us can do - and I include my climbing self - is give it our best shot. That should be the Maydays' project. We shall communicate our darkness to each other as revealingly as is

---

psychochemical harmonics. This is the Standard Model of future Lobbyism. Jesuit colleagues of Lonergan will note how it sublates radically the simple suggestions of Ignatius' *Two Standards*.

<sup>45</sup>Lonergan, *For A New Political Economy*, 20.

convenient to us in this beginning of the summer of 2011.

June is the climbing month of some chosen topic, and for the seven gallant essayists, a tough challenge. The seven essays - each reaching in length something between 2 and 8 single-spaced pages - are to evolve slowly, with exchanges all round as well as within the core group and with myself. I suspect and hope that the general tone will be “can you believe how lost we are?”

But there is the significance of the cover story, with its heuristic naming, named and described as best each of us can.<sup>46</sup> *Described?* : we are the heart here of our human trouble. Dare any of us tackle that deaf-post kept-in-touch dark-screen seriously?<sup>47</sup> Forty years ago Lonergan talked to me regularly during his lectures in Dublin, indeed late into our evenings, about the climb. One of his lecture mornings, as we walked to the lecture hall to begin the day, he spoke of his effort of the previous day, “Well, that was better than *Method*”. Might we honour him forty years later by doing better than *Method*, by climbing beyond those descriptive chapters even if only in heuristic suspicion?

When might we edge towards a mature science? Perhaps “in a hundred years or

---

<sup>46</sup>Relevant here is the presentation of an incomplete set of diagrams in *Prehumus 2*, “Metagrams and Metaphysics”. An argument for the necessity of such diagramming is given in my “Metaphysical Control of Meaning”, *Method. Journal of Lonergan Studies* 24 [2006], but the basic point is made at decent length by Lonergan in *CWL 7, The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, 151. His powerful paragraph on the topic ends with the statement: “Thus, if we want to have a comprehensive grasp of everything in a unified whole, we shall have to construct a diagram in which are symbolically represented all the various elements of the question along with all the connections between them.” This topic is to be central to the efforts of the ten active members of the seminar, in their reach for a glimpse of future functional interpretation, but the challenge is there for all of us. If you can’t stand diagrams you are just out of this Lobbyism ballpark.

<sup>47</sup>This is a book-size topic as well as a huge challenge of later cultural shifting to a new humanity. Perhaps neatly symbolic of the challenge is the manner in which I imported Cantower 23, “Redoubt Description”, as a sort-of footnote undertow, into my 2008 Website book, *Lonergan’s Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry*. The problem haunts the second canon of hermeneutics.

so.”<sup>48</sup> When is the science to be the cosmopolitic success?: perhaps in the 10<sup>th</sup> millennium. But now is the time to sow little seeds on stony ground.

So I conclude this sketch of the challenge of the second seminar that stumblingly asks, “What is functional interpretation?” But it seems important to end here with the final paragraph of *FuSe* 6:

I would like to conclude with what may seem a very odd suggestion of my own which emerged today. It is a matter of naming the reach of our efforts, and how the human group is to go about the work named by Lonergan in his unknown X, Cosmopolis.<sup>49</sup> It struck me that what we need is a lobby: yes, I am thinking of the thugs around Capitol Hill in Washington. But now I think of a persuasive attitude quite beyond present muddlings and greed, a new culture titled LOBBYISM, a culture that climbs in the Tower Community and flows into the subjects of common sense, an ever-ready-countercurrent<sup>50</sup> to general bias, flowing through, and living in, global Common Sense as Object. It is the fantasy of a reality not of our time but of later millennia, so that those later luminous subjects will smile, as I suggested earlier, at chapter 7 of *Insight*, with its description of the primitive common sense of these earlier times. They are to speak a HOW-language,<sup>51</sup> a language of, and true to, the heart of human loneliness, a

---

<sup>48</sup>This is a recurrent line of the Irish poet Patrick Kavanagh, one that I used to set a mood in my Website book of 2008: *Lonergan’s Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry*.

<sup>49</sup>*In Joistings* 22: “Reviewing Mathews Quest, and Ours” I brought out the identity of functional collaboration with the reach towards realizing the aspirations of Cosmopolis. Here I am pushing for an effective, unavoidable, “in your face” naming that could shift the statistics of successful realization.

<sup>50</sup>Ever-ready? “The antecedent willingness of hope has to advance from a generic reinforcement of the pure desire to an adapted and specialized auxiliary ever ready ....” (*Insight*, 747)

<sup>51</sup>My first struggle with the need for this massive cultural shift was in chapter 2 of *A Brief History of Tongue*: “How-Language: Works.” I had not even noticed then the neat connection with the root reality of the word HOW: **H**ome **O**f **W**onder.

language resonant with the promise normatively present in all human exchanges, including the exchanging of money.<sup>52</sup> It would be “above all politics. So far from being rendered superfluous by a successful world government, it would be all the more obviously needed to offset the tendencies of that and any other government to be shortsightedly practical.”<sup>53</sup> It would be, with massive refining effectiveness, “concerned with the fundamental issue of the historical process.”<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup>I foresee a massive shift in the theology of money, money as promise sublated into a thinking of the New Covenant, itself a lift of the Old Covenant of *Jeremiah* 31: 33, “a law in the minding heart”. It is at this level that one finds full luminosity regarding the evil of derivatives.

<sup>53</sup>*Insight*, 264.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, 263.