

**FuSe 17 D Risking Positioning**  
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I. Professing and Confessing

a. “Ethics, Profession and Citizenship”

Courses on “ethics” and “applied ethics” have swept the curriculum where I teach in Mexico. One of those courses, a core requirement for all graduating students, is “Ethics, Profession and Citizenship” (“Ética, profesión y ciudadanía”). This semester there are thirty-four students enrolled, about half are studying robotics or business administration, another handful international business, a smaller few animation and digital design, three are studying humanities, and two are studying industrial engineering.

During the first week of the course we examine the etymology of the course title: “ethics” (“ética”) from the Greek *ethos*,<sup>1</sup> refers to customs and character that individuals and societies acquire over time; “profession” (“profesión”) from Latin *pro*, a preposition which means “in front of,” “in the presence,” “in public,” and *fateor*, which means “to manifest,” “to declare” or “to proclaim.” From these words are derived “professor” and “profession.” Citizenship (“ciudadanía”) comes from “citizen,” early 14c., meaning inhabitant of a city, especially someone who is entitled to the rights and privileges of a free man. Besides a handful of readings dealing with personal and professional ethics, the rights and responsibilities of citizens, and the meaning of work in contemporary society, the semester-long course also includes mock job interviews, with CV and cover letter in hand, along with readings and discussions about the dynamics of a win-win negotiation.

There are certain points that I stress with my students, points that seem to me central not just for the course but for their formation as professionals. The first is that

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<sup>1</sup> “*Etos*” (Spanish for *ethos*) was recently added by the *Real Academia Española* (RAE) to the *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*. RAE is an institution located in Madrid, Spain which, in addition to publishing dictionaries and grammars, is the institution responsible for regulating the Spanish language.

ethics has to do with habits, customs, and beliefs, and with developing character, possibly even becoming a “character.”<sup>2</sup> In a third-semester course the students have already read Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, so there is a prior context.<sup>3</sup> A second point is that the “professionals” that they are and are becoming refers not only to the exercise of an office, an art, a science or some other position with affection and interest, but also to manifesting and proclaiming, in both word and deed, certain beliefs and convictions related to their profession. A third point is that while we negotiate many times each day in both professional and personal circles, the dynamics of negotiating are quite complex, and that diagrams can help us manage the complexity. Another point that we ponder is the role of a mediator when negotiations reach an impasse. A good mediator should be experienced, impartial, and open-minded. How open-minded? What does it mean to be impartial?<sup>4</sup>

Naturally the students have their minds on graduation, on what awaits them in the “real world” and what their professional role might be, whether in a small or medium business, or another public or private institution. Thus we spend time pondering what they have to profess about their professional formation (major) and imagining how their professing might evolve over the course of time with professional and personal experience and learning. A topic that is of interest to nearly all of them is the relationship between professional life and personal life, i.e. how they will manage the tensions. They intuitively know that the two lives are really one life, that it is not always possible or even desirable to separate the two.

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<sup>2</sup> The Spanish for this is “personaje.”

<sup>3</sup> Some of them have no recollection of what Aristotle says about “the good,” “happiness,” “moral virtue,” and “why we need friendship.” Could it be that the relay race of Aristotelian “virtue ethics,” Kantian “deontological ethics,” Mill’s “utilitarianism,” etc. is inefficient? Lately I have been wondering if it would be worthwhile to spend a semester slowly appropriating the eighteen terms that appear on page 48 of *Method in Theology*, replacing the commentary there with examples from soccer, dancing, and other capacities and needs, for example the capacity and need for decent conversations. A context is “Conversations,” chapter 31 of *Introducing Critical Thinking*, J. Benton, A. Drage and P. McShane, Nova Scotia, Axial Publishing, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> These questions are relevant to understanding the role of a dialectician. See the comments about mediating a win-win negotiation in the paragraph at note #12 below.

b. "I answer that ..."

*I answer that*, some of the earlier doctors, considering the nature of concupiscence as regards generation in our present state, concluded that in the state of innocence generation would have been effected in the same way.... But this is unreasonable. For what is natural to man was neither acquired nor forfeited by sin.<sup>5</sup>

Besides the ethics movement that has swept the curriculum, there is another (related) movement to implement "critical thinking." In order to counter the tendency to conceive of critical thinking as a technique recently discovered in California, or worst, as something with measurable outcomes, I suggest to students that critical thinking is not easy, that it entails thinking slowly and sometimes in less than ideal conditions, for example the way Marie Curie developed methods for the separation of radium from radioactive residues in laboratory arrangements that were poor while both she and her husband undertook much teaching to earn a livelihood. Another image of critical thinking is the way you or I would think about a dear friend or beloved.<sup>6</sup> I also suggest that it is possible to think critically about sex, love and marriage, and that Thomas Aquinas thought about such realities. Even though theology is not taught at my university, I consider it worthwhile to read an article or two from the *Summa* in order to witness a critical thinker in action. Many students are surprised to discover the range of questions posed by Aquinas. It is enlightening to discover the doctor lifting up the positions of other doctors and uttering fantastic expressions such as "sensible delight would have been the greater in proportion to the greater purity of nature and the greater sensibility of the body."<sup>7</sup>

"*Respondeo dicendum quod ...*" What was Aquinas doing? Was he professing? Was he taking a stand, a position? Was he lifting up other positions that did not coincide with his own, i.e. counter-positions? It is interesting to notice that in his "answering"

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<sup>5</sup> *Summa Theologica*, I, Q. 98, a. 2.

<sup>6</sup> See the text mentioned at the end of note #3; also relevant is the "way temporal subjects can be so intimately one with another through love that this loving union leads to oneness in belief, and oneness in belief in turn leads to understanding." Bernard Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics*, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2007, CWL 12: 407.

<sup>7</sup> *Summa Theologica* I, Q. 98, a. 2, ad 3. Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province, Westminster, Christian Classics, 1981, p. 494.

he sometimes refers to Augustine, to “the Philosopher,” or to Boethius, but sometimes he simply refers to himself in earlier articles: “As we have shown ...” (*Ostensum est autem quod ... ut supra ostensum est.*)

Functional dialectics, I believe,<sup>8</sup> is about professing, speaking myself forward, and speaking in the first person: “*Respondeo dicendum quod ...*” I also believe that Lonergan somehow managed to uplift Aquinas’s “I answer that ...” into a contemporarily efficient mediation of glocal negotiations. The task involves taking a position with respect to progress and decline in history – quite a task if I am serious about becoming an integral heuristik structure of the concrete good, being and becoming!<sup>9</sup> – distinguishing between positions and counter-positions, objectifying a horizon by indicating what would follow from developing the positions and reversing the counter-positions, and then doing a final objectification. This is obviously not a topic for a PhD thesis, but rather the task of a lifetime for wise elders.

Then why not stick with research and interpretation? After all, aren’t we supposed to be reading, interpreting, and perhaps even comparing Heidegger and Levinas, Rahner and Lonergan? Aren’t we to “learn to broaden [our] horizon by reading the philosophers and attending to the parts where they are obscure, where [we] do not understand them”?<sup>10</sup>

Well, yes, that is where group began in the first e-seminar “Functional Research,” looking for obscurities in the writings of Lonergan.<sup>11</sup> But now we are focusing on a different task, which, as it turns out, includes as a specific sub-task *comparison*.<sup>12</sup> The task is wise mediation, analogous to the task of mediating a win-win negotiation, in this

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<sup>8</sup> *Experto crede*. Believing in order to understand is part of our human condition. Here I use the word “believe” because I do not understand this new mode of professing and confessing; reproducing the efforts that lead to the discovery of a framework for efficient and beautiful collaboration is beyond me.

<sup>9</sup> The dialectical movement is towards self-transcendence, the overcoming of conflicts, and the discernment of ambivalence: “Only through such discernment can he hope to appreciate all that has been intelligent, true, and good in the past even in the lives and the thought of opponents.” (252)

<sup>10</sup> CWL 18:284.

<sup>11</sup> There are more than 50 postings on the blogspot from January 15 to April 12, 2011, which are contributions to the first e-seminar “Functional Research,” an effort to pick up on a phrase, sentence, paragraph or section of CWL that would be worth pursuing and worth cycling through the other specialties.

<sup>12</sup> See McShane’s writings on the meaning of *comparison* in Cantower 39, Quodlibet 6 and SOFDAWARE 2.

case mediating between indirect and direct discourse, and between distinct but related phases of local and global care.

c. Eloquent tongues

You make eloquent the tongues of infants.  
Refine my speech  
and pour forth upon my lips  
the goodness of Your blessings.  
Grant to me  
keenness of mind,  
capacity to remember,  
skill in learning,  
subtlety to interpret,  
and eloquence in speech.<sup>13</sup>

For Aquinas it was not his custom to flow forth in the *Summa* the way Augustine flowed forth in the *Confessions*. However, it would be a mistake to conclude that his thinking about happiness in the *Summa*, I-II, QQ. 1-5, for example, was not autobiographical, that the heart and mind of the author of hymns and prayers were a different heart and mind than the author of the *Summa*. It would also be a mistake to read his professing, which followed critically thinking things through, as if he were not also speaking sub-words, i.e. speaking himself forward, all he knew somehow being with him.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *Devoutly I Adore The: The Prayers and Hymns of St. Thomas Aquinas*, translated and edited by Robert Anderson and Johann Moser, Manchester, Sophia Press, 1993, page 43. The Latin original reads: "Tu, qui linguas infantium facis disertas, / linguam meam erudias / atque in labiis meis gratiam / tuae benedictionis infundas. / Da mihi / intelligendi acumen, / retinendi capacitatem, / addiscendi modum et facilitatem, / interpretandi subtilitatem, / loquendi gratiam copiosam." (42)

<sup>14</sup> "All we know is somehow with us; it is present and operative within our knowing; but it lurks behind the scenes, and it reveals itself only in the exactitude with which each minor increment to our knowing is effected." CWL3:303. It would be quite an achievement to read the "sub-words" of Lonergan's two Thomist studies, or what he would later call the "genuine achievements of the human spirit," (*Method in Theology*, 352) into his later works. For example, one of the findings of Lonergan's *Verbum* articles was that Scotus's self (see note #126, CWL2:39) is nothing like Aquinas's self: "... not a problem of moving from within outwards...that seizes the difference between subject and object in essentially the same way ..." (CWL2:98-99). *Insight* is an invitation to discover the invisible comeabout self (see p. 537), but it cries out for sequences of non-truncated high school and undergraduate texts. Needless to say (?), it would be a timely achievement to read myself and discover myself in the later works, and kiss the silliness of Lonerganism good-bye. A comeabout interpretation of "Finality, Love and Marriage" will

Though difficult and certainly not for the masses, “indicating the view that would result from developing what I regard as positions and reversing what I regard as counter-positions”<sup>15</sup> sounds something like the description of a humble confession; and it is. Dialectics is a task that asks wise elders to bare all, to self-expose. This is one reason why relatively few have paid much attention to the task of dialectics, and in particular to page 250.<sup>16</sup> It might simply be too personal to bear such baring, such self-exposure.

I will get around to bearing *as(s)* baring below, but my point here is that even though dialectics is difficult, it is also quite homely, as homely as confessing. How ridiculous it would be: (i) to confess without “examining”<sup>17</sup> first; (ii) to confess for another person: “My friend Freddy is playing basketball at the moment; he’s got something he wants to get off his chest, so he asked me to confess for him; that’s why I am here”; (iii) to add footnotes to the confession: “I really want and need to clear my chest, but before I do I would like to contextualize what I am about to confess in what Heidegger says about the everyday consciousness of *Das Man*, the ontological possibility of the call of conscience in care (*Sorge*), and the possibility of conceiving existentially the call of “Guilty”<sup>18</sup>; (iv) to confess to myself. Page 250 says, in so many words: objectify subjectivity and then do another, final objectification. But regardless of what the page says, the basic psychology of speaking and listening is that we speak and listen differently to and with others than we do to and with ourselves. And the great advantage of taking a stand and confessing to one another “in the style of the crucial experiment” is that this “will provide the open-minded, the serious, the sincere with the

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intimate a new spirituality of sexuality. See P. McShane, “Interpreting ‘Finality, Love, Marriage,” <http://www.sgeme.org/BlogEngine/post/2011/05/08/Interpreting-Finality-Love-Marriage-by-Phil-McShane.aspx>

<sup>15</sup> *Method in Theology*, 250.

<sup>16</sup> See also Patrick Brown, “Some Notes on the Development of *Method*, Page 250,”

<http://www.sgeme.org/BlogEngine/post/2011/10/01/FuSe-14B-Some-Notes-on-the-Development-of-Method-Page-250-by-Patrick-Brown.aspx>

<sup>17</sup> Self-assembly is part of the dialectician’s examination. “The turned paged corners you with the mark *include*. Corners you? Are you somehow included in the *include*?” P. McShane, SOFDAWARE 3 “Reading Care into Method 250,” at page 4.

<sup>18</sup> “... *das im Gewissen gerufene ‘schuldig’ existenzial zu begreifen.*” Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Eadward Robinson, New York, Harper & Row, 1962, note #1, page 325.

occasions to ask themselves some basic questions, first, about others but eventually, even about themselves.”<sup>19</sup> Fred Crowe was on to this when he asked: “Is an Augustinian confession of what we have been, of the past that has made us what we are, required as an integral part of theology when we enter upon the tasks of dialectic and foundations?”<sup>20</sup>

## II. How are we doing in the functional specialization e-seminars?

### a. Who are we?

Those of us participating in the e-seminar series are a motely group, living in different parts of the globe, with different backgrounds, interests, professional titles, and varying levels of commitment to the e-seminar. Some are holding down full time positions, others are semi-retired, and still others are retired. Some have been real troopers, submitting essays in each seminar. Others have submitted one or two essays. As of Friday, October 28, 2011, seventeen different people have posted over ninety articles in the “Functional Specialization Seminar” blogspot.<sup>21</sup>

What unites the motely group? I suppose we share an interest in the topic, the possibility of efficient and beautiful collaboration, one that might “begin a new sequence that can keep revealing ever greater breadth and depth and wealth.”<sup>22</sup> I suppose that the motely group also shares the belief that the e-seminar project is not a waste of time. For those whose time and talent allows, belief is seeking understanding, i.e. a little light on what Lonergan discovered and scribbled in February of 1965. I imagine that some of the e-seminar participants, possibly many, believe that attempting functional collaboration, even if our destiny is to crawl or stumble, helps us to get a bit

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<sup>19</sup> *Method in Theology*, 253.

<sup>20</sup> Frederick E. Crowe, SJ, *The Lonergan Enterprise*, Cambridge: Cowley Publications, 1980, p. 91.

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.sgeme.org/BlogEngine/archive.aspx>

<sup>22</sup> *Method in Theology*, 237-238. Lonergan goes on to say that “Such an about-face and new beginning is what is meant by a conversion.” The conversion or displacement in question in the e-seminar is towards beautiful, efficient and care-filled collaboration, which “is a slow process of maturation” whose “results will not be sudden or startling.” (253)

of light on the subject-object-subject matter “method,”<sup>23</sup> and that in good time the group of collaborators will be a global group of guys and gals luminously “ready to sacrifice immediate advantage for the enormously greater good of society in two or three decades,”<sup>24</sup> or two or three centuries. I also imagine that many of us believe<sup>25</sup> that Philip McShane, the e-seminar leader, is not out of his mind in suggesting that functional collaboration is being mothered by history and will, in good time, become an ever-more efficient and beautiful “auxiliary” means of cycling timely ideas, a non-police force life-set on healing, creating and wisely mediating the flows of basic and surplus goods and services in your town and in mine while spinning-out amateurs.<sup>26</sup>

b. Our meager findings

Like the strange set that contains itself, the creator of dialectics included himself as a player in the new game of dialectics. Other players “have to meet that single assembler who is an unavoidable part of the assembled.”<sup>27</sup> In the first e-seminar a

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<sup>23</sup> Your spontaneous reading of the word “method” can be enlightening. Do you spontaneously think that “method,” like a cooking recipe, is prior to doing, and that we are going to understand functional collaboration before attempting it?

<sup>24</sup> *Method in Theology*, 361.

<sup>25</sup> Self-appropriating belief is by no means easy (see *Insight* CWL3: 725-739), but recall that a key moment in critiquing belief is “to point out the far-reaching significance of the discovery of even one mistaken belief.” (738) A candidate for one mistaken belief is that we babbling babes have smoothly transitioned to the second time of the temporal subject. In the essay “Belief: Today’s Issue,” (*A Second* Collection, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974) Lonergan writes that “the contemporary issue is, not a new religion, not a new faith, but a belated social and cultural transition.” (98) The question “How belated?” invites a reflection upon the two times of the temporal subject. Regarding the role of belief in the “meantime” transition, recall the out-wordings in *The Triune God: Systematics*, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2007, CWL 12: “In the second way, temporal subjects, although they may themselves have little understanding of their own nature, can nevertheless hear and believe the words of another who does understand, and by their own will and intention live according to what they believe, and finally even arrive at an understanding of it, in accordance with the dictum, ‘Believe in order to understand.’” (407)

<sup>26</sup> I imagine that this spin-out is a hard pill to swallow, unless you are being and becoming in the friendly cosmos. Terry Quinn commented on one hard pill – the “reversal of roles, in which the sensible container becomes the intellectually contained” (*Insight*, 537) -- in “Body Bridge and the Concrete Intelligibility of Space and Time.” <http://www.sgeme.org/BlogEngine/post/2011/05/12/Body-Bridge-and-the-Concrete-Intelligibility-of-Space-and-Time-by-Terry-Quinn.aspx> The seven attempts at functional interpretation which appear in the appendices of FuSes 11 & 12 suggest “existentially gapping” pills to swallow. Like the chemistry of the turtle, the chemistry of the super-ego is a gap in my humanist-linguistic education. Dealing with that chemistry is a whole other issue. Well, no, not wholly other: “If my intelligence is mine, so is my sexuality. If my reasonableness is mine, so are my dreams.” *Insight*, CWL3:499.

<sup>27</sup> See P. McShane Quodlibet 5, “A Simple Reading of *Method in Theology*, Page 250,” at page 9. <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/quod-05.pdf>

handful tried to meet him by identifying anomalies in the trail of words he left behind. In the second e-seminar “functional interpretation” a group of seven samurai attempted to functionally interpret selected passages from the self-included assembler, passages that spanned quite a range of topics: the concrete intelligibility of space and time (Terry Quinn); the categories of functional collaboration on page 287 of *Method in Theology* (David Oyler); the second stage of meaning (Alexandra Gillis); the chemistry of the superego (William J. Zanardi); generalized empirical method (James Gerard Duffy); the first three chapters of *For a New Political Economy* (Philip McShane); and the functional specialty communications (Robert Henman). In the third seminar five members of the e-seminar submitted essays on functionally interpreting the history of Lonergan studies: “One Hundred and One Damnations” (Phil McShane); “Some Notes on the Development of *Method*, Page 250” (Patrick Brown); “An Attempt at Communicating History Functionally” (Robert Henman); “Reading *For A New Political Economy* in Light of Functional History” (Michael Shute); and “Calculus Pedagogy in 2011: suffering vascularized off-skin views of minding” (Terry Quinn).

We read on page 4 of *Method in Theology* that “the fruits” of collaboration are “cumulative and progressive.” But there is a problem, an obstacle, a difficulty:

The difficulty here is that you are, most likely, quite innocent of the collaborative challenge that the study of progress is. Progress is a totality of molecules and documents, and “the totality of molecules and documents cannot be interpreted scientifically by a single interpreter or even by a generation of interpreters. There must be a division of labor, and the labor must be cumulative.”<sup>28</sup>

The difficulty indeed is one of being innocent of the massive collaborative labor of studying the totality of molecules and documents that constitute progress. The collaborative labor of would-be functional researchers, interpreters, and historians includes various, difficult sub-labors: understanding in the mode of generalized empirical method, mediated by “apparently trifling” exercises; a line by line control of meaning; directly speaking in the mediated, “forward” specialties; being at home in the

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<sup>28</sup> Philip McShane, FuSe 15 “The Future of Functional History” at page 7. <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/fuse-15.pdf> Please note a double trickery in my quote: McShane replaces “documents” in the original quote (*Insight*, 610) with “molecules”; I combine the two and replace “flowers and animals” in McShane’s quote with “progress.”

general categories; etc. In the current e-seminar “functional dialectics” we are taking a shot at reading and doing the second half of page 250. How many of us read the page in anticipation of its disappearance into the thin air of a post-Merleau-Ponty luminosity regarding the is-ing of concrete extensions and durations,<sup>29</sup> a sub-word of the book *Method in Theology*?<sup>30</sup>

There is no good reason – not one that I can find anyways -- to expect anything more than meager findings, crumbs you might say. We in the e-seminar have not been commonly attending, understanding, judging, and anticipating the way those collaborating in CERN are: finely-tuned to particular tasks and to one another.<sup>31</sup> We do not share a standard model, a common *acquis*, or whatever you would like to call what is slowly to emerge in the next century or three. There is no tradition or ethos of reading, thinking and living thusly, so we are pretty much stuck doing it badly in the meantime.<sup>32</sup> In addition, even though leaning forward is spontaneously normative in “real life” situations, like the rescue of thirty-three miners trapped underground for sixty-nine days in San José, Chile, August-October 2010, an ethos of looking backwards

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<sup>29</sup> I make the same point with respect to the disappearance of the forty-six word GEM formula at the top of page 141 of *A Third Collection*, in “Towards Functional Interpretations of Generalized Empirical Method” <http://www.sgeme.org/BlogEngine/post/2011/05/23/Towards-Functional-Interpretations-of-Generalized-Empirical-Method-by-James-Gerard-Duffy.aspx> at note #36.

<sup>30</sup> With regard to sub-words, McShane underscores the importance of Bruce Lindsay y Henry Margenau, *The Foundations of Physics* (John Wiley & Sons, 1936) in the life of Lonergan. Cf. chapter 10 “The Dominant Context of Lonergan’s Life” in Pierrot Lambert y Philip McShane, *Bernard Lonergan: His Life and Leading Ideas*, Vancouver, Axial Publishing, 2010.

<sup>31</sup> The European Organization for Nuclear Research (The name is derived from the acronym for the French *Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire*, or European Council for Nuclear Research) is a large and respected research center whose business is fundamental physics. The instruments used at CERN are particle accelerators and detectors.

<sup>32</sup> Arriving at a meaning of “meantime” is what dialectics is about, “presenting an idealized version of the past, something better than was the reality.” (251) Fantasy, a leading candidate for “the one thing most lacking,” mediates humble acceptance of always-and-forever being and becoming in the meantime; and embarrasses various shades of unimaginative “modern” and “postmodern” hybris that is our axial psychic home. *Method in Theology*, page 250, is a veritable crucible, a bare-assing spin-cycle created by a genius. All the art forms and all the forms of human inquiry are included in dialectics, including art history, musicology, biomimicry, and physics. “Now you might say that this physics stuff is beside the point. Your business is theology, or philosophy, not modern physics. Your business, rather, if you are in the Tower of Functional Specialization, is the concrete good, being and becoming and the integral heuristic thereof.” P. McShane, *Quodlibet 6 “Comparison and Integral Canons of Inquiry,”* <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/quod-06.pdf> at page 9.

dominates both in print and in university classrooms, thus the forward specialties are mostly empty. There is no ethos of common adventure.

### III. Counter-Positions and Positions

#### Seven Counter-Positions

1. Understanding sometimes occurs unconsciously, like growing hair;
2. Aristotle's point about the doctor curing individual patients<sup>33</sup> is relevant for medicine, but not for economics;
3. Academic divisions of philosophy and theology by topics, figures, periods and approaches beautifully and efficiently promote progress;
4. My paper "MacIntyre and Lonergan on the History of Philosophy," delivered on November 6, 1999 at the American Catholic Philosophical Association, St. Paul, Minnesota, was beautiful and efficient;
5. Footnotes are crucial for communicating timely ideas;
6. Locally implementing timely ideas is a political matter that is beyond the mission of the university;
7. An abundance of views that result from developing basic positions and reversing counter-positions has been published or are otherwise available.

#### Seven Positions

1. Understanding, while organic and "reaching down" into human biochemistry, is not unconscious;
2. The good is particular and concrete, and includes basic and surplus goods and services;
3. Much thinking and educating will be needed before a creative minority swings into generating cumulative and progressive results;

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<sup>33</sup> "[O]ne does not see how a weaver or a carpenter will benefit in the practice of his art by knowing *Good Itself*, or how one will be a better doctor or a better general by having contemplated that Idea [the *Good*]; for it appears that what a doctor examines is not health in this manner at all, but the health of man, or perhaps rather the health of an individual man, since what he cures is an individual [and not man in general]." 1097a8-14.

4. My paper “MacIntyre and Lonergan on the History of Philosophy” was a well-intentioned essay with no street value;<sup>34</sup>
5. Wise elders speak directly;
6. In good time metaphysics will be implemented in Morelia, the city where I live in Mexico;
7. Professing and confessing a view that results from developing basic positions and reversing counter-positions is beyond the current academic culture.

#### IV. A Resulting View

There, I have written my seven plus seven, my minimal-list. Is there a way to line-up the positions with humility, generosity, temperance, diligence, chastity, kindness and patience? And a way to line-up the counter-positions with arrogance, greed, gluttony, sloth, lust, envy, and anger? I doubt it, but in any case my task now is a “resulting view,” a “further objectification” that results from developing positions and reversing counter-positions, and later doing a “final objectification” in yet another go-around. My task is writing about the object “dialectic” as it appears on page 250 of *Method in Theology*, but also writing about myself.<sup>35</sup> In front of (pro-) and in the print-presence of you, my reader, I am taking a stand about taking a stand.

Is this taking a stand, this pro- and confessional business, not strange? Well, yes, that brilliant page 250 seems to be asking, inviting, cajoling, and caressing me to bear the baring of my ass, “perhaps diaries and obituaries and eulogies of ceding repentance and seeding hope.”<sup>36</sup>

What is it to speak in my own name about progress and decline, without denying that my mind is neither at first nor at last my own, that “the talking animal is talked

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<sup>34</sup> An example of “assembling” (last word on page 249 of *Method in Theology*) MacIntyre’s *After Virtue* is found in P. McShane, SOFDAWARE 6 “Rambles in Method 250.” <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/sofda-06.pdf> McShane looks for indications of MAC (concepts result from understanding) and/or McA (understanding results from [analyzing] concepts) and notes that the advantage of such detective work is “coming to self-appreciate by noticing the muddles in the author you read.” (3) The dominant McA view coincides with refusals to seriously understand, the general bias that reaches down into our neurochemistry and “constitutes a sick existential gap that grounds the tragedy and comedy of learned axial talk,” and “assures the exclusion of adult growth in these axial times.” (5&9)

<sup>35</sup> “When the philosopher or theologian speaks about his object he is also speaking about himself.” CWL 18: 280.

<sup>36</sup> See P. McShane, “A Simple Reading of *Method in Theology*, Page 250,” *Quodlibet* 5, at page 10.

into talk by those who talk at him,"<sup>37</sup> and that I cannot but be a humble servant?<sup>38</sup> Do I fear persecution, ridicule, or misunderstanding?<sup>39</sup> What am I to do?

To ease the tension I consider opening up another document in WORD to write in the privacy and safety of my diary, saving it as a private file in the folder "diario" (Spanish for diary), then, without taking even one shot of tequila, I will cut and paste from my diary reflection into this essay on dialectics.

Progress? Exactly two years ago, October 29, 2009, I wrote a reflection for my students: "La Salsa y el Progreso" (Salsa and Progress). In the essay I describe my experience of learning to dance the salsa, a very humbling experience of re-educating the biochemistry of my "gringo" body. Spontaneously I dance the familiar swing: so progress requires effort, attention, focus, reorientation, maybe even rehabilitation.

If dancing is not your thing, no need to fret. Any analogy will do. In any and all cases, patience and humility are paramount, for example the humility to recognize that heuristics greatly help in the understanding of biochemical changes in a "gringo," Mexican or Korean body. The same is true if I attempt to speak of progress and decline on a larger scale. It is one thing to descriptively identify example of the "three differentials,"<sup>40</sup> but it is another thing to recognize that speaking luminously about progress is beyond the level of our times.

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<sup>37</sup> "Our humanity is itself a cultural heritage; the talking animal is talked into talk by those who talk at him .... His mind is not at first his own, but the echo of his elders. The echo turns into a voice, the painted portrait steps down from the frame, and each of us becomes himself. Yet by the time we are aware of our independence, we are what others have made us." Austin Farrer, *Love Almighty and Ills Unlimited*, Londong, Collins/Fontana, 1967, 114, cited in Fred Lawrence, "Lonergan's Foundations for Constitutive Communication," *Lonergan Workshop*, vol. X, ed. Fred Lawrence, Boston College, 1994, p. 241.

<sup>38</sup> The phrase comes from *Luke 17:10*. See also Lonergan's early (1930s) metaphysics of solidarity in "Pantôn Anakephalaiôsis," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies*, Vol. 9, no. 2, October 1991, 139-172.

<sup>39</sup> The original religious sense of the word "confession" was of one who avows in spite of persecution or danger. The six italicized words on pages 249-250 of *Method in Theology* (*assembly, completion, comparison, reduction, classification, selection*) describe tasks that will reverse persecutions and dangers, which include the longly-cycled, poisonous poise of textbook traditions of "basic concepts," "first principles," etc. that have maimed our molecules. See also Terry Quinn, "An Essay Towards Functional History," <http://www.sgeme.org/BlogEngine/post/2011/10/01/FuSe-14E-An-Essay-Towards-Functional-History-by-Terry-Quinn.aspx>

<sup>40</sup> See CWL 10, chapter 3, section 1 "The Differentials of the Human Good." McShane is keen to remind us that Lonergan's sub-word for "differential" emanated from a systematic understanding of the historical process by which "differential" developed. See note #14 in FuSe 15, "The Future of Functional History,"



Here I sit on this fine Saturday morning, typing my “here I stand,” bearing as(s) baring: “Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart.” (*Job* 1:21)

Warm-up exercises this morning included skimming SOFDAWARE 4-7 and Quodlibet 5. I know, and have known for decades now, that McShane is almost unreadable, that he has climbed too fast and too far; but an image here, a poem there, a paragraph, even a joke can loosen up the mental muscles. Yep, insight is into and in the phantasm.

The joke this morning was on me: of the ten questions on the Metasystematics 300 exam at the end of SOFDAWARE 6, I could only take a shot at questions #2, #9, and #10. Somewhere McShane remarks that a passing grade would be 18%.

This fourth e-seminar is focused on functional dialectics, while the exam is “metasystematics,” apparently a topic of the seventh e-seminar. Is the exam implicit in the six italicized words on the first half of page 250? Is it implicit in the task on the second half of that page, the task of indicating a view that results from developing positions and reversing counter-positions, and in the final task of assembling, completing, comparing, reducing, classifying, and selecting the resulting views of fellow-dialecticians? In any case, no need to fret or panic even if the 18% mark is beyond me. As my eight year-old niece would say: “That’s ok.”

My task this morning is to take an authentically narrative thematic stand: “slipping into my life.”<sup>41</sup> Yesterday I cut back on my list of positions and counter-positions, initially ten and ten. Why? Twenty seemed excessive. Why seven and

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<http://www.sgeme.org/BlogEngine/post/2011/09/07/FuSe-15-The-Future-of-Functional-History-by-Phil-McShane.aspx>

<sup>41</sup> “Slipping into your life / Is like a scared hero / Touching with a naked toe / Some grass he must keep off,” Mallarme, 189. The first verse of an untitled poem, quoted in P. McShane, Quodlibet 5 “A Simple Reading of *Method in Theology*, Page 250, at page 5.

seven? Seven days of the week, Seven Dwarfs, the Seven Wonders of the World, the seven heavens and earths in Islam, forgiving seventy times seven, seven notes in the musical scale, the seven liberal arts (*trivium* and *quadrivium*), 7-Eleven, 7UP with a shot of Seagrams 7, "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers," seven capital sins and seven capital virtues? Last week I watched with students the movie "Se7en," with Brad Pitt and Moran Freeman.

Slowly I struggle towards a private self-assembly, knowing that this is simply not acceptable given current academic standards, knowing that this journal entry would not be included in my portfolio for tenure review. Will the terrible non-ordinariness of self-assembly and self-positioning become ordinary in good time? Will something resembling Progoff journaling find its way into lower and higher education?

Yesterday in the talk I gave to a group of directors and educators from local high schools, I mentioned that perhaps the single greatest challenge and opportunity that we face today in institutions of education is one of cultivating fantasy. The topic came up because my colleague and friend Gabriela asked me to speak about Maria de Los Angeles.

Who is Maria? She is a great dame who will live in Jesús del Monte in 150 years, "una mujer culta" (a cultivated or educated woman) who understands the basics of micro-, meso-, and macroeconomics. In the fantasyland of my imagination, she was fortunate enough to have received a decent liberal arts-science education, she has a great sense of humor and knows how to "alburear" (Spanish for bantering back and forth, usually with sexual overtones). Most of the townspeople respect her wisdom and turn to her for guidance regarding local business decisions and other matters.

Maria self-knows that understanding is pivotal for communicating timely advice to the townspeople. The long years that she has dedicated to understanding has brought with them a tremendous respect for simple and complex diagrams, meta-words, and convenient symbols. It is obvious to her that without heuristics, metaphysics is impossible. She (self-) knows that progress in heuristics requires progress in linguistic controls. It is also obvious to her that the good life in, of, and for

Jesus del Monte is concrete, but that understanding and implementing that concreteness requires patient and disciplined study. Her fantasizing about the local economy of Jesus del Monte includes flows to and from the larger economy of Morelia and the state of Michoacán.

When Maria speaks to her friends and neighbors, she does not refer to Aristotle, Vincent Van Gogh, Marie Curie, Bernard Lonergan, Emmy Noether, John Maynard Keynes, Thomas Aquinas or Richard Feynman. (Direct speech is not such a problem outside the academy. I remember the young man dying of AIDs who called from Mexico City last year to ask for a prayer on the radio air.) But she knows that texts from these and others are being recycled by a dream-team of glocal carers. Her friend and colleague, Francisco, who also lives in Jesús del Monte, has a nose for finding relevant data and anomalies. Her unique gift is communicating; his unique gift is finding anomalies. Their conversations are unintelligible to the townspeople, but the townspeople do not resent such complexities. Maria is also in touch via international conference calls with Frau Berta Gutzeit, Roberta Kim, and other communizers living in towns and cities in other parts of the globe. Her conversations with them help her to creatively select from a range of possibilities the one most convenient for the situation in Jesús del Monte.

Not all is well in the town of Jesus del Monte. In particular, not all the professors and administrators at the local university are interested in the slowly emerging trans-disciplinary collaboration. Some resent the fact that Maria's conversations with Francisco are unintelligible. Some have dedicated years of teaching and publishing models and conceptual maps using what they call "basic concepts," and so they insist that these models and basic concepts are relevant to the concrete good of Jesús del Monte. In town meetings and base community seminars, Maria has claimed that the models and conceptual maps have nothing at all to do with the good of Jesus del Monte. They insist that their conference papers and publications in refereed journals are relevant to the flow of tortillas, light bulbs and gasoline in Jesus del Monte. She disagrees. Secretly they harbor the suspicion that Maria is a postmodern game-player

who has a hard time speaking clearly. Once, in a rather heated exchange (Maria claims such heated exchanges is the fundamental meaning of the task “completion,” one of six tasks done by Miguel, a fiery-eyed, skinny, wise old man living in Bogotá, Columbia) at a round table discussion on “sustainable development” at the university, Maria asked Max, the director of the university, to speak autobiographically about his interpretation of the mission statement of the university. Max was outraged.

In general, there is a division between those professors and administrators who do not understand why Maria is fond of satire, humor, riddles, and neologisms, and those who do understand. Some of those who do not understand also secretly harbor the view that their colleagues struggling to understand and implement functional collaboration are on the wrong track. Maria has asked them to air their concerns publicly, but for some reason they remain silent.

Some of those opposed to making functional collaboration a topic, after drinking two or three tequilas at night, wonder if their models and basic concepts have anything at all to do with the flow of tortillas, light bulbs and gasoline of the people living in Jesus del Monte. The thought that their academic lives have little or no street value terrifies them, as does the possibility that in good time the efficiency of functional collaboration will cycle them out, along with many other educated folks. It is difficult for them to enjoy the many weddings and anniversaries in Jesus del Monte. This saddens the other townspeople, especially the children, who believe that dancing, singing, and laughing are great things to do at weddings and anniversaries.

At the local university, students have been reading Dante’s *Inferno* and are able to name deadly sins and lively virtues. Some of them suspect that there is a bit of pride and wrath lurking in the university. Their zany chemistry teacher, Monica, a semi-retired, self-proclaimed dilettante, whose doctoral dissertation, oddly enough, was on Derrida’s grammatology, and who is writing a non-truncated and empirically rich high school chemistry book, claims that there is chemistry in deadly sins and lively virtues.

Monica’s relationships with her students are de-stabilizing, in a good sense. They know she is a little “different,” but they respect her efforts both to understand the

chemical universe and to help them understand the chemical universe. After all, they too are part of the chemical universe, so Monica is making a connection between the Socratic “know thyself” and their study of chemistry. But it gets even better; somehow she manages to teach them themselves while teaching them chemistry. One student, Manuel, is known to have quipped: “Studying chemistry with Monica is sexy!”



Thus ends my diary entry from Saturday, October 29, 2011. How did you do in your diary?

Now – ready for some comic relief? – I ask: what would my eight year-old niece have to contribute to a “resulting view”? She knows nothing of positions and counter-positions and would probably grimace if I asked her about intellectual, moral or religious conversion. But she is no dummy. Spontaneously she remembers past Christmas vacations and imagines the near future. “What are we going to do to have fun?” is an important question for her, and when I visit she has a plan, as does her younger brother. She has idealized the past and has a position on progress. Her view is that dancing with a disco ball, drawing & painting, and watching “Calamity Jane” or some other classic movie with lots of dancing and singing, not to mention a female protagonist, are fine activities to pass the holidays.

Reading does not come easy to her, but she knows that reading books is important, and that re-reading can be revealing. When I read to her aloud, she finds it funny when I change the story by replacing words. She giggles and says: “That’s NOT what it says.” She also knows that while household chores like putting toys away are important, that doing chores is not the goal; leisure time to do fun things is the goal. She probably sees no good reason why the holidays should end and the grind of the workaday world begin again. She likes buying toys and gifts, and she wonders if there is an unlimited amount of money in the ATM. She wonders about money, what it does, and how it really works. She also wonders why people at mommy’s work are being laid off. She gives mommy lots of credit, and she is not afraid to ask her simple

questions. If at night mommy reads to her a story about cooperation, perhaps a story about a lion lying down with the lamb, she must wonder: "How could we be more like them?"

Besides dancing, "fun time" for my niece includes changing lyrics while singing, combining old words in new patterns, and playfully inventing new words. I sing to her: "I said a boom-chica-boom." She sings in reply: "I said a boom-chica-rocka-chica-rocka-to-the-moon." She would not be put-off if she were to overhear the Chinese Ako **minging** her elegant word of inner-worded *teoria*.<sup>42</sup> But she would probably wonder if Ako sings and dances as well. As do I: might singing and dancing redeem the tragicomedy of television newspeak, techno-speak, post-scientific speak, post-system speak, and doctrinal-speak in these dark, axial days of linguistic decline? Who are our visionaries, seekers, and wise fools?<sup>43</sup> How are foundational elders to listen and speak, to sing and dance, to live and die in 2111 or 9011?

*Love of my life I am crying;  
I am not dying, I am dancing,  
Dancing along in the madness;  
There is no sadness, only the song of the soul.*<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> See P. McShane, SOFDAWARE 4 "Care: From Name to *Nomos*," <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/sofda-03.pdf>  
Note that Ako's complex word for theory "gets out into common use in the culture, ... slips into commonsense in a post-theoretic meaning." (3)

<sup>43</sup> Fantasy and direct speech will be topics of the fifth e-seminar "Functional Foundations." It is quite a stretch to fantasize a later humanity that smilingly asks of this stage of history: "Did we really go through a period of humanity's pilgrimage when elders scarcely existed, when the old were 'not old folk but young people of eighteen, very much faded'?" P. McShane FuSe 7 "The End of Lonerganism: Fuse or Refuse," <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/fuse-07.pdf> page 8.

<sup>44</sup> Cris Williamson, "Song of the Soul."