

FuSe 18 Ways to get into Functional Collaboration

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[I post this as **FuSe 18**, the usual third Fuse of a Seminar, in this case the seminar on dialectic. But it is written to reach a general audience, especially during the year 2012, when I struggle to make this a topic among Lonergan students. The usual “ending stuff” of a seminar is found this time in **FuSe 17 Mc**. For the “advanced people” the important stuff here is after note 7, where I am making points regarding canons 2 and 3 of Hermeneutics.]

I have been asked by people in and out of the seminars¹ to suggest ways to get going in, and into, this collaboration. I use the name *functional collaboration* rather than *functional specialization* for two reasons. First, collaboration was a dominant interest of Lonergan in the final pages of *Insight*: the word *collaboration* occurs over thirty times in those final dozen pages. The need for it had bubbled up very strongly in that final section 3 of chapter seventeen. Secondly, the real trouble with the new scientific mode – and it is alas a very new mode – is not the naming – specialization, collaboration, whatever - but what lurks in the adjective, *functional*. And it seems to me that attending to that meaning, and getting into the mood and mode of its operable meaning, is where we might make a realistic start.

I am not going to pause over the problems of the writing of *Method*: they have been aired sufficiently over the decades. But I would note that, however clear Lonergan was about the meaning of *functional*, he did not manage to build that meaning effectively into the book.

So we could begin by thinking together about the required functionality. And I would note that this thinking is a slow messy business, as we found out in the first of the 25 seminars, where we spent three months grappling with the notion of **functional** research. Chapter 6 of *Method*, as Lonergan himself knew, is not much help. It was very enlightening for us seminar members to putter round with the realities of good collaborative researching in order to begin to appreciate the difficulty of becoming sufficiently luminous about it to have a constructive shot at it. Think of the transition from competence in singles tennis to competence in doubles. You get the rough idea of playing doubles from watching and talking, especially if a watcher and talker with you is a coach. Wimbledon center-court doubles is quite

¹The seminars referred to are running at the rate of one every three months from January 2011 till Spring of 2017. More details are given below in note 6. There are three sets of seminars: 1-8 focus on the general categories, dealing with functional collaboration in each of the specialties in turn. Seminars 9-16 shift interest to the special categories of the Christian tradition. Seminars 17-24 move to a broader global vision. The 25th seminar, open-ended, pushes for the heuristics of an integral neurochemical everlasting.

another ballpark from just watching, or just playing in the local park. Functional collaboration is a grand-slam activity.

Think now, if I may so stretch your imagination, of a familiar theological doubles, Boyer and Lonergan. This was one of my starting places in the seminar on functional research, with *Grace and Freedom*, where Lonergan interprets Thomas in the old-style messy fashion: successful, yes, yet not effectively functional – and that failure is worth thinking out. There is the neat but rough illustration of functional research provided by Lonergan searching out Charles Boyer in the autumn of 1938. "Lonergan asked him to be his director." Boyer had to get into focus, might I say as functional researcher? Well, no; but let us go on. "Finally Boyer reached for his copy of Thomas Aquinas's *Prima secundae*, pointed to an article that he himself had difficulty in interpreting, and suggested that Lonergan make a study of that article in itself, of its *loca parallela*, and of its historical sources."²

In that first seminar, we did a series of exercises to show, show ourselves operatively, how Boyer might have been more help: hunted out the *loca parallela*, etc etc. This seems artificial to the old style thesis writer or interpreter, and so, in the seminar, we needed to turn to another key starting place, indeed the starting place suggested by Lonergan in the first pages of *Method*: the successful simple science of physics which has reached a sufficient maturity to expect "cumulative and progressive results."³ This other starting place helps to get a grip on the distinction between functional research and functional interpretation. I won't go into detail here, but I continue to emphasize the need for exercises, for experience. This push was found to be difficult for our 50 odd members in the seminar. Most of them could not, so to speak, hold to the researching that, in parallel, was second nature to the communities in physics who check data for anomalies, positive or negative, hunt around for previously missed pointers, patch stuff together to send signals to the theory group. It is second nature to good research physicists to leave to the theoreticians the job of making the theoretic perspective fit to meet discovered anomalies.

But what emerged out of these difficulties was the presence of an *acquis*,⁴ a Standard Model, in a mature science like physics or chemistry and its relative absence in philosophy and theology. This was a

² *Grace and Freedom*, CWL 1, xiii.

³ *Method in Theology*, 4; 5 has the same expression in italics.

⁴ Best quote Lonergan's usage of this suggestive word, an earlier echo of my Standard Model: "And 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 call 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

huge and discomfoting question that we faced in that first seminar, and in different ways in the seminars that followed. We are obviously not going to face it here in any seriously illuminating way. I must ask you to appeal to analogies in your own lines of work or play or artistry or whatever. Or to your sufficient interest to tackle the volumes of *Journal of Macrodynamical Analysis* that express briefly the seminars' struggles.⁵ I think that the key thing here is to pause seriously over Lonergan's phrase "cumulative and progressive results," and think of the contrast between the relative stability and cumulative progressiveness of the simple sciences of physics and chemistry, and the mess of the other sciences in the twentieth century.

Already I have delayed too long over this entry zone, the zone of functional research. It seems to me better at this stage to move on, and indeed to skip quickly through other suggestions of how to start into functional collaboration, so that you would have a chance of an overview, and indeed of optimism regarding the whole enterprise. So let me back off from the temptation to spend the whole essay talking about functional research – making it perhaps the chapter of a pretty big book – and move into something that is more like a detailed table of contents of a how-to book. You will notice an absence of reference – for example, [6] below screams for references to Mark Morelli's various writings – and an effort to be compact. I made an effort to hold each point to sixty words.

[1] firstly on my how-to list is the challenge to begin to think **functionally**. Use analogies from factories: who is talking to you, to whom are you going to talk: where here I am thinking of the talk that is the receiving of a wheel to tire it up and getting the wheel properly to the chassis person. I usually write of this in terms of relay-racing: the tricky tasks of getting and passing the baton.

[2] next there is problem of communicating the results of the whole collaborative enterprise. This is a problem that has bubbled up at the past two (2010 and 2011) end-of-workshop meetings in Boston. We are not doing too well at getting this stuff across. What we need here is to get functional about it, for some of us, indeed I would say for lots of us, to accept luminously the task of passing on enlightenment.

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."CWL 22, p. 464 (a 1968 essay). A large problem in starting functional collaboration is that we may be a decades away from the emergence of a standard model. I tackle this problem in the Website book, *Lonergan's Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry* (2008). There is a lead-in to the Standard Model in the previous website book, *Method in Theology: Refinements and Implementations* (2007).

⁵The 25 volumes are to appear with a lag of about nine months after the 25 seminars (4 seminars a year till spring of 2017). The progress of the seminars can be tracked through the emerging 80 essays titled **FuSe**, available on my Website.

[3] Thirdly, there is the problem of taking a creative stand with Lonergan in his identification of categories. I do not say an understanding stand: I am thinking rather of the analogy with chemistry from Grade 11 on: the stand, the familiar periodic table, is printed on the inside cover of the text. It is taken for granted by schools, by research institutes, by industrial chemists.

[4] Deeper than, and prior in the cyclic system to, the creative stand, there is the critical stand. This lands each of us, in our different autobiographies, is some version of the task of lines 20-24 of page 250 of *Method*. We all need to position ourselves, at least privately for ourselves. And then there is the subgroup of us, the unfortunates called to the public self-exposure that give the heartbeat to functional dialectic.

[5] Next, there is the task of all of us, but especially of those reaching some formal way towards changing the future, of finding that serious speaking is direct speaking. Otherwise one becomes a sort of a two-way signpost. And I would note that this is true even of the tendency to point back to Lonergan or Lao-tse or Luke's gospel. A very strange and strenuous business this functional forwardness.

[6] Again, a task for all of us within the formal collaboration is to take seriously the heavy challenge of getting beyond both Kant and Hegel in our possession and being possessed by The Position on fact and truth. We have to move to a new century in which Jack and Jill are poised in dark realism, something quite uncommon in contemporary conversation among Lonergan experts.

[7] Finally, there is the issue of a kataphatic stance, whatever or theism is. Recall [3] here. It is obviously here not a comprehending stance but a dark and mysterious stance weaving round [6]. In the Christian tradition of collaboration it rises to the sublation of *Romans* chapter 8 that is the Mantra, "Double You Three", **W₃**.⁶ It is to lift the presence described in [6] into the context of "eo magis unum".

⁶W₃ is the third of my series of Metawords that are necessary to hold the Standard Model together. On this, see *CWL* 7, 151: "if we want 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.") Above you notice that I am pushing for a fuller effective symbolism of the integral quest. W can be found in many places, e.g. in **Prehumous 2** on the website. The Mantra is to be central to seminars 9-16, whose focus is the special categories of Christian thinking. But is it valid for seminars 1-8 and 17-24 with **3** replaced by **n** (n=0,1,2,...). The Final Seminar 25 will face the task of an integral eschatological perspective. At all events, I am trying to handle the pilgrim need expressed in the Upanishads: "Make thy body the fire-matrix, and **Om** the fire-stick, practice the drill of meditation [dhyana], then wilt thou see God, like hidden (fire)" (I quote from a De Smet translation given on pg. 249 of *Divyadaan. Journal of Philosophy and Education* 22(2011), R DeSmet, "The Upanishad of Grace and Love." The pilgrim issue is a preparatory contemplative chemicalization of a fuller post-mortem presence, meshed with a gracefully controlling inner word.

I halt my list at seven, but my list in fact goes on. Yet I do not think further listings would help at present. Besides, the next item on my list is one, frankly, that brightens my enterprise considerably, since my taking it off the present list is a neat way of implicitly answering those in whom - at some stage in the reading, perhaps at the title or the author's name – the question bubbled up, Why this functionality anyway?

So, I play my ace. Notice, by perusing my list again, that I slipped past the second and third specialties. Why? Those in my seminar can have pretty sound suspicions. As I am writing, we are venturing into the fourth seminar, having had a terrible time with the previous two. Why? Because of what I now call the Grand Canyon that is section 3 of *Insight* chapter 17. We enter the fourth seminar now – at the beginning of October 2011 – in a tricky fashion that enables us to avoid that Grand Canyon journey, even though that tricky way involves us in skipping the horrid tasks described at the top of *Method in Theology*, page 250.

My ace is an invitation: try to push through the hermeneutic problem of interpretation and history towards some plausible solution to it. Or, if you are convinced that Lonergan had even the beginning of an answer to the problem – and he certainly thought that he had – spell it out for us. What you may find is that Lonergan's amazing beginning of an answer is in fact the seed of the dynamics of functional collaboration.

No doubt a clue would be welcome here. Go, then, to that hilariously dense two pages of *The Sketch*, and home on the extravagant claim about what constitutes pure formulations: "They are pure formulations if they proceed from an interpreter that grasps the universal viewpoint and if they are addressed to an audience that similarly grasps the universal viewpoint."⁷ Now add to that image the bundle of images that go with that equally-hilariously dense 2nd paragraph of the directives regarding the second canon of hermeneutics. The paragraph ends with the magisterial "fuse into a single explanation."⁸ But what follows in the third and final paragraph of that canon is history's gay assembly of writers and artists, admiring commentators and critical interpreters. And there is the *Assembly*⁹ of such assemblies. How, in the name of all that's holy (literally!), might that "wave in the eternal stream of human beings of the eternal strivings of the human spirit towards home"¹⁰ fuse into a single

⁷ *Insight*, 602.

⁸ *Insight*, 610, line 9.

⁹ The last word on page 250 of *Method*.

¹⁰ Herman Hesse, *The Journey to the East*, London, 1970, 12.

explanation? We are trying to pull together an inner word “the Concrete Intelligibility of Space and Time.”¹¹ Might Lonergan end here, as he does in the final paragraph of that underpinning chapter five of *Insight*, by saying “the answer is easily reached”? No, he ends by claiming that the job can be handled by a heuristics of “approaching terms through differences. Because the differences can be explained genetically and dialectically, the interpretation of non-explanatory meaning is itself explanatory.”¹²

Why do I consider this my ace? Because we have the bothered Lonergan nursing the major problem of the realisability of this, straining round a series of principles of criticism in a third canon. The first sentences of that canon point to his dark struggle of the next eleven and a half years. “Thirdly, there is a canon of successive approximations. The totality of documents cannot be interpreted scientifically by a single interpreter or even by a single generation of interpreters. There must be a division of labor, and the labor must be cumulative.”¹³ But what about progressive results of the labor? We are back to where I began, inviting you to muse over the statements at the beginning of *Method*: “Cumulative **and progressive** results.”

Quite a journey this, from the third canon of hermeneutics to the division of labor that offers a cyclic achievement of global omnidisciplinary progressive results. But there you are: another way, a 8th way if you wish, for any group of us “to get into functional collaboration.”

And lurking in the conclusion to the last paragraph on the second canon is a 9th way, the way that eventually is to shape the seventh functional specialty.... “: from the “explaining genetically and dialectically” you can shift – by counterpositional work on the dialectic components – to a richer genetic systematics, or - we should be thinking now in the *Praxis* of leaning forward - towards a fuller Pragmatics. There is nothing mysterious in the shift I mention here: think of the developmental study of a species of dog. The group concerned study sick dogs and add to a developmental account of health in the species a reversal of illnesses. But I have dealt with this a greater length before, and indeed see it as counterproductive to go into further detail here.¹⁴

¹¹ The title of the concluding section of chapter 5 of *Insight*.

¹² *Insight*, 610: the end of Lonergan’s brief 3 paragraph treatment of the hermeneutic canon of explanation.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ I cannot resist pointing you to the text that gave me the shocking leap to Lonergan’s view of a genetic systematics. It is thirty years since I sat in the Toronto Lonergan center struggling with *De Intellectu et Methodo*, (1959), yet I still remember sharply being lifted to a vision of genetic systematics by the passage on page 55 about controlling mathematical meaning. I quote the passage in *Cantower 7*, “Systematics and General Systems Theory”,

So I choose to halt here, but with a closing appeal. The appeal is right on our topic, in that it fits in with a shabby version of the eighth functional specialty. I talked earlier of the doubles-players, Lonergan and Boyer of 1938. Thirty years later, Lonergan and I played doubles, so to speak, when he wrote to me a couple of times asking me to “find an economist”. He was playing a shabby eighth specialist, and I was a pretty naïve student of his economics. I haven’t found the economist yet, and – as I look back on it now - a decade later I messed up the strategy of the game of dealing with rackets in economics. Let me tell you about that before I add in my appendix, a template for some journalist out there who wishes to win some of Joseph Pulitzer’s money, or for some economist to pick up a Nobel prize.

In 1977 Lonergan had decided to teach his economics in Boston College. So, as a back-up I taught the 1944 typescript¹⁵ twice that summer in Boston, once in the workshop, and once after to an “advanced Lonergan Group”: crazily, I covered the whole typescript with each group in about ten hours. Lonergan wrote later about how please he was about the outcome, and in the Autumn he grinned at me one morning while we were working in his room in St.Mary’s Hall and said, “now I know how I am going to handle this: I’m going to red it at them twice!”. Had I nudged him towards total coverage? Not that it was a mistake in the circumstances: the objective was to get his disciples thinking in the area. We were not looking for an economist or a journalist. The trouble was, and is, that the strategy of total coverage, coupled with inevitable comparative comments, got into the tradition, and we are still sadly at it.¹⁶ I have done it myself over the years, and it just does not work when you are looking for a journalist or an economist with clout. I have got myself involved in erudite discussions about hedge funds, credit default swaps, money as commodity, etc etc. Yes, indeed, Lonergan offers refined heuristic answers to the present mess of Wall St., The White House and The Grey House, Congress, Banks, etc. etc. and his heuristics allows us to envisage an adequate effective empirical economics of a century hence.¹⁷ Indeed, the pointing could be focused sufficiently to colour the debates for the American election next year, or the European and Chinese messings that are heading us for monetary disasters in the near future. But the communicative issue is not broad comparison but the little steps of education that any schoolboy or

at note 29: it is given in English from pp. 130-132 of the translation (1990), “Understanding and Method,” of Michael G.Shield.

¹⁵ Reproduced as the third part of *CWL 21, For A New Political Economy*.

¹⁶ We are sadly at it all over the place, regularly comparing Lonergan and X in an old-style descriptiveness which allows us to neatly avoid being in the conversation ourselves in a positional fashion, avoiding thus the discomfort of Lonergan’s meaning of *Comparison on Method*, 250.

¹⁷ See Part One of my *Sane Economics and Fusionism*, Axial Publishing, 2010, especially chapter 3, “Imaging International Credit”, and the notes to it: notes 116-119, on the parallel between the development of a single-layered global hydrodynamics and, with a century’s lag, the future of a two-layered global monetary dynamics.

schoolgirl could know.¹⁸ The issue is the beginnings of grade 11 economics. That is the direction of my template in the short Appendix below.

But before you venture there, and are thus motivated to find an economist or a journalist, please notice what I am doing here, in these last few paragraphs.

I am interpreting my talking of 1977, and puttering around with my sorry story of presentations of thirty years after that. I am musing about reversing my presentational position. I am sowing foundational seeds of a new genetic pragmatics of global shifting in economic education and practice. Indeed, simply, I am doing a popular turn in and about the second half of *Method* 250. And, further, you will note that that is what I have been doing right from the beginning in relation to our Lonergan traditions.

And might my effort, in those few paragraphs, at what could be regarded as a shuffle into functional autobiography, help you to do a similar soft-shoe shuffle? Our shuffling, of course, would be a slim lean forward, picking up on hints from chapter 12 of *Method in Theology*, and shuffling forward new doctrines. But best halt and let you muse over the shortcut to journalistic and economic awards.

¹⁸ I first presented chapter one of *Sane Economics and Fusionism* as a single economics grade-12 class in St. Ignatius School, Sydney, Australia. The unbrainwashed boys got the point pretty easily. For a strategy of doing such pointing in school classes – or even in first year university courses - while still getting the students through the text-book rubbish and the inevitable exam, see, on my website, Prehumous 1, “Teaching High-School Economics: A Common-Quest Manifesto”.