

FuSe 19**Contexts of Functional Foundations****1. Two Cents Worth**

By now it is hardly necessary to make the point that we, I, pick up the baton as it is handed to us, me, from the previous specialty. Yet, in the present state of messy immaturity - or should I say battered seed-state? - I need us to pause here in a special weighing of where we have arrived: or rather how we are poised, normatively, in this ten-meter overlap of the fourth baton-exchange in the 800- meter-run towards an effective lift of communications.

It is good and wise to envisage the mature science of omnidisciplinary collaboration.¹ This is easiest done by adverting to our familiar successful science, but now lifted into the full answer to the question, What is physics? That answer would place the improved standard model, and all the details of its fallout into the nooks and crannies of physics and technologies and arts, within functional collaboration. Teaching techniques, laser lancings, and government funding would all be within that answer., and in that later culture all would be relatively well in classroom, hospital and parliament.

I talk conveniently of 7 millennia ahead: of 9012 A.D. In whatever is to replace present theology perhaps even in name - Fusionism? Lobbyism? Whatever - all will be well. "There is such a thing as progress, and its principle is liberty."² 2011 saw that principle screaming along the north coast of Africa. We need to feel it screaming along the north coast, north face, frontal lobe, of each of our psyches.

But the scream has to blossom as the direct speech of wise foundational persons.

¹That in fact is the topic of my talk at the Puebla Lonergan Conference, Mexico, "Arriving in Cosmopolis," June 16th 2011, available in the Website's Archives.

²*Insight*, 259.

What is to be the character, who are to be the characters, of that direct speech?³

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persons.**

There you have my two sentences worth of foundational direct speech.

2. The Problem of Contexts

Our work together in the four previous seminars has led us to envisage to main contexts: the *acquis* of Lonergan and the *acquis* of his disciples. Some of us took a stand on the opposition between them, the terrible yet settled existential gap between the old descriptive ineffectual theology and the possibilities of Lonergan's foundational stand.

I wish to set the stage for our foundational efforts, but is my setting foundational? Is the last paragraph a foundational statement? Indeed, I claim now that it is, and so it is. I pause here, smiling at the thought of Yul Brunner's Pharaoh, "So it is written; so it shall be done": there is certainly need for humour here, as I take a stand against many of my colleagues.⁴ Well, we must have satire and humour; Am I playing Prince Hal or Falstaff?⁵

³May I once again draw your attention to the first two sections of chapter 14 of *Method in Theology*? Where I make **character** the central word of that foundational first section - recalling the beginning of Aristotle's *Magna Moralia* - and point to the second section as street-reach.

⁴The stand has many facets, many of them deal with by the "seven samurai" of *FuSe* 11 and *Fuse* 12. The most evident, perhaps, is the neglect of "the bridge", as Lonergan identifies chapter 5 of *Insight* in its first paragraph. Note 9 below draws attention to our limiting of interest in these first eight seminars to the general categories, but occasionally - as here, and in note 9 - I venture remarks helpful to those among us who have an explicit Faith-bent interest. So, I think of "the bridge" in Catherine of Siena's *Dialogue* (1378). Foundational talk of the bridge, Jesus, is massively distorted by failure to come to grips with the elementary bridge. Jesus is no more "out there" than "extension" or "seen red".

⁵I refer here particularly to the Prince's speech in Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part One*, Act one, scene 2, lines 182-209. In *Lack in the Beingstalk* (Axial Publishing, 2007, pp. 5-6, 53-54) I began to view these lines as a nudge: that it was time I spoke out about the abuse of Lonergan's

But yes, I am dictating: only those who take a stand with Lonergan's *acquis* - personally possessed or only admired - are member of those moving now into direct speech. That is how this collaborative global science is to work, so that is how it should start. Each cycle of progress in physics or chemistry etc pushes the direct speech forward: there is no returning to epicycles or to phlogiston.

Perhaps then I should ramble on, briefly, with some of my own foundational fantasy here, as a lead to others, and to myself, searching, in this seminar, for foundational fantasies operable this year and this millennium?

This next year, 2012? It happens to be a double anniversary: *Method in Theology* appeared in print forty years ago, and, seventy years ago, Lonergan completed his magnificent *For a New Political Theology*. Surely the community of Lonergan's disciples will pay effective attention to the core challenge of both those works: to transform both theology and economics from their commitment to descriptive and destructive muddling to the seeding of functional collaboration in their two zones? Nor am I talking here in a vague fashion, but with the precision of foundational intent. The fantasy is to be effectively cycled, and that cycling is to be illustrated by the success of the venture through the three seminars to follow. That venture will be, indeed is, calculated to be discomfiting, and impolitely so. "Doctrines that are embarrassing will not be mentioned in polite company."⁶ The time for politeness is long past. By the end

meaning by Lonerganism, "smother up his beauty from the world" but now in my eightieth year, yes, it is time. It will win me no friends, yet what I do has been a standard refreshing element of *Completion* talk (*Method in Theology*, 250, lines 3-6) in areas as different as physics and music. I think of the physics community's harsh humour regarding Herman Weyl, or the first reaction of Debussy to Stravinski's *Rites of Spring*. Debussy changed his mind in a few months, and Herman Weyl now stands out as the father of gauge theory. My disagreement with Lonerganism in general [of course there are some few who think that serious understanding is important] has not changed but increased and it goes back at least 40 years. Now I see the movement as drifting along like Aristotelianism and Thomism did and do, especially dodging Lonergan's major insight regarding Cosmopolis' identity. See, on my Website Archives, "Arriving in Cosmopolis", mentioned in note 1 above.

⁶*Method in Theology*, 299.

of the year, surely some effective groups will take up my two slogans: in economics, “There are Two Types of Firm,”⁷ in theology, “There are Two Types of Minding.”⁸

This millennium? Best leave comment on that to FuSe 22, “The Future of Functional Foundations”, where we shall pick up on our creative collaboration in these next ten weeks, sketched in *FuSe* 21. But the heart of that millennium’s effort is worth pausing over in a final introductory section.

3. The Foundational Hypothesis

The parallel I appeal to here is the Periodic Table in chemistry with its implied set of relations, whether those close to 1870 or those that belong to the contemporary network of primary and secondary determinations, enriched by aggregate-analyses of lower conjugate potency, form, act. We have the parallel hypothesis - Lonergan’s *acquis* - in *Method in Theology*, pages 285-8.⁹ My rambling in section 2 regards my foundational

⁷This is the strategic entry point for the new economics. There is little value in elaborate discussions of more complex issues. The topic treated in detail - but for Grace 12 - the first chapter of P. McShane, *Sane Economics and Fusionism* (Axial Publishing, 2010).

⁸This is only a strategic slogan, pushing for the noticing that, as well as conception and affirmation, a metaphysics requires implementation. In functional specialist terms I am hoping to encourage a single emergence: the emergence of communications as a necessary focus.

⁹As we have known from the beginning, Seminars 1 - 8 would hold to getting a grip on the general categories sketched in those pages, with the addition, on page 287, of a (10) that notes functional specialization as intrinsic to the perspective. Sem 9 will move us into the larger context of Christian Faith, and Seminar 17 will further broaden the reach to global faiths. Note 4 above acknowledged the value of intimating the larger contexts. Here I think of possible data of the cycle that begins with Seminar 9. The central data, of course, is the inner dynamic of faith seeking understanding but that faith and that seeking has a context in layers of expression. I am thinking at present of the value of a focus, in Seminar 9, on the layers of expression associated with the fourth gospel, and of the twist and turns of those layers through the latter part of the 20th century. For a decent sense of that muddled rambling see John Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 2nd edition, Oxford University Press, 2008. Muddled? We encounter the same problems we did in Seminar One. There is no standard model; there is a standard muddle, a regular muddling along through methodological problems. An intimation of the needed shift may be had, for instance, by taking Ashton’s work (pp. 387- 411) on light and darkness, the world,

view of our efforts to take hold of this hypothesis and steady it up as standard model in this next millennium. The steadying-up, of course, is to be creative: like the transposition of the meaning of *transition* at the beginning of chapter 3 of *For A New Political Economy*, or the lift of the study of human willingness of CWL 1 into the context of *Verbum, Insight and Method in Theology*. But, very evidently, there has been an emphasis in our five seminars of work on the illustration of collaborative work of the enrichment that is to occur through such cyclic collaboration as that of the seven samurai of the second seminar. Are we to expect the enrichment to be entirely positive, or might we find Lonergan someway trapped in his time? If there is to be such a find it has to come the usual route, through the discovery of negative anomalies.

4. Our ten-weeks personal musings

Each of us has a personal positioning which includes at least an open admiration for Lonergan's pointing, open to refined amendments, but, please, not open to dragging us back to chit-chat about other views. Those of us who have battled through one or all of the previous seminars possess, and are possessed by, their position in some luminous fashion. There may be a few joining us as beginners: they need to play catch-up, with my help and with colleagues who have been with us already.

But even without a great deal of self-luminosity, or even a decent start on the elusive positioning talked of in *Fuse 16*, we can all share a definite focus. I named a precise narrow focus in the second last paragraph of section 2 above, what you might call my pet projects, and you are certainly invited to share that focus and muse over it

life, judgment, and imagining it in the context to which Lonergan points, within his two volumes on Trinitarian Theology, in his "*Excursus: The psychological analogy of the trinity*" (CWL 12, *The Triune God : Doctrines*, 839ff), he too writes of light and darkness, the world, life, judgment, but with luminous subjectivity. In seminars 9-16 we must place such writing in the new context of functional collaboration. What of Ashton and those represented by his 24 pages of bibliography? Certainly Ashton's work is first class in its context; but that context is one of truncated and functionless theological discourse.

creatively, fantastically, effectively. But there is the broader project that can be identified as coming to grips, in the same way, with sections 1, 2, 5, and 3 of *Method in Theology*, chapter 11. Within that project there is another focus, a pet project not only of mine but of the seven samurai that pushed us within the seminar on functional interpretation and thus baton-wise, forward. That push is symbolized by the single brutal paragraph in the middle of page 287 of *Method*. "From such a broadened basis one can go on...." to rewrite the first part of *Method* in a doctrinal and explanatory fashion that would lift us out of the mess described in the paragraph of *Insight* that ends "arriving on the scene a little breathless and a little late."¹⁰

¹⁰*Insight*, 755: recall the pointers of note 9.