

FUTUROLOGY 8 THE 8-FOLD CYCLIC WAY FOLDS OTHER WAYS

Do you view humanity as possibly maturing—in some serious way—or just messing along between good and evil, whatever you think they are?¹

This is the penultimate essay of these nine that are calculated to interest people in the heuristics of eschatology and in the road towards it through functional research. The final essay, indeed, is already finished, with this problematic eighth essay haunting me. Why is it, has it been, a problem? Because it comes to the heart of Lonergan's life: folding the global reach for God in a suitable method, where method, is me-thod, me-plod. Yes, I have to deal with Russell's method and will do so,² but there was and is that fuller context named in the title. An alternate name for it would be "Method in Metaphysics," the title of *Insight* chapter 14, and that alternate name and number—14—help me to answer the question that I posed in chapter 14 of *Futurology Express*: "How can I possibly communicate briefly the complex richness of this solution to the problem of history's tadpole swimming?" I cannot, of course, in this essay. The 14 trick helps.³ But then I think, looking at things on the bright side, that my writing life has been a climber's climbing effort to find and communicate the dynamics of our richly complex-tuning to the Symphonic Christ.

This morning I pondered over Lonergan's Notebook of his 30-day Amiens retreat of 1937, and paused over three lines of his tiny

¹ The question is posed in *Futurology Express* (Axial Publishing, 2013), chapter 14, where it is repeated from chapter 9, but it was originally posed in *Questions regarding Functional Talk*: see Q/A 32 and Q/A 56 (the Q/A series is available at: <http://www.philipmcschane.ca/qa-01.html> & <http://www.philipmcschane.ca/qa-02.html>).

² I do so when I come to comment on the final section 4.6 of *Insight* chapter 14, titled "Scientific Method and Philosophy."

³ I have been using this sort of trick for more than a decade, the trick of paralleling chapters, e.g., paralleling *Cantowers* 14 -21 with the corresponding numbers of *Insight's* chapters. In the present case I refer to the more elaborate paralleling of *Insight* 14, *Method* 14, and *Futurology Express* 14. The focus of *Cantower* 14, "Communications and Ever-ready Founders" (available at: <http://www.philipmcschane.ca/cantower14.pdf>) was on *Insight* 14 and *Method* 14, and it also brought into parallel the two sets of canons from *Insight* 3 and *Insight* 17.

scribbles on page 51.⁴ The italics, the lay-out, and the absence of punctuation are his and the word ‘hurry’ is ‘pen’ bold-faced by him:

“failures but what I do for the Lord lasts eternally
slights but God loves me **hurry**
Did I do all possible? Absurd look at things on bright side”

So, here, I am inviting you to pause contemplatively over one of his successful failures, one that has been consistently slighted: chapter 14 of *Insight*. Furthermore, I look at things on the bright side, a bright side caught in the concluding quotation from him in *Futurology* 9.

As it happens the question of the slighting of *Insight* 14 sends me back to my first effort to point to the massive lift Lonergan gave and gives to Thomism, “The Contemporary Thomism of Bernard Lonergan.”⁵ There I pointed out that the reading subject may miss the personal reality described at the end of both the first and the second paragraph of that fourteenth chapter. I bring this problem out by noting that Lonergan might have been better off—was this a failure of his?—if he had titled *Insight*’s chapter 12, “The Notion of Ompa.” “Ompa, then, is the objective of the pure desire to know.”⁶ Ompa is a nominal definition in “a tricky topic.”⁷ With that change, the reader would be less likely to mistakenly think that the epistemological problem was solved before arriving at chapter 14.⁸ It is not. One needs to turn the page at 387⁹ and face the horrid

⁴ I do not think that this document is as yet publically available. It runs to 56 pages, and handling its tiny writing will test the skill of some future editor. Further, there is the test of sorting out content and references in relation to the retreat master of those thirty days. Jesuits, be it noted, do a directed thirty-day version of the *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* twice, in the novitiate’s first year [but they also attend in their second year of novitiate] and in a final year of probation after theology.

⁵ See note 26 in *Futurology* 2, “Out-of-Body Experiences.”

⁶ *Insight*, CWL 3, 372. I have obviously replaced the word *Being* by *Ompa*.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ I refrain from quoting mistaken views among Lonergan experts. The challenge here is for you to check whether you misread the word *being* in chapter 12, or misread the clear subjectivity, the epistemological neutrality, of chapter 13.

⁹ I refer here to the pagination of the first edition. It was strategically neat to meet the blunt challenge at the top of page 388. Further, I cannot resist remarking on the editing mistake, repeated regularly in the CWL edition of *Insight*, of compacting Lonergan’s layout into a dense paragraph. I do not think that good editing warrants this messing with the author’s intent.

decision:¹⁰ “can I take a gutsy first stand on the real page 388 being no bloody¹¹ way like the already-out-there-now page 388?”

I have mentioned very deliberately and regularly that such pausing ought to be contemplative, and I mean, of course, kataphatic contemplation: in that mode, “not only to read *Insight*, but to discover oneself in oneself.”¹² This piece of the text is a high and serious contemplative pause-invitation.

Now I leap—but you had best, later, crawl line by line—to another part of the chapter, that part, indeed, that I would wish so much to have my durational elderness meet your duration climb, but here must failingly, slightedly, ask you in a sentence for a response to your sentencing by Lonergan’s sentence on page 442 that I come presently to quote, a response something like my response to *A Song to Remember* in 1945.¹³ I ask you, thus, but for later horrid decision, to meet the Tower question, the towering question with which I began this essay, adding—you will see and seize, one word: **Do you view your humanity as possibly maturing—in some serious way—or just messing along between good and evil, whatever you think they are?** Can you, might you, be the bewildered subject of the first two paragraphs of *Insight* 14, bent on being close to a teacher in the journey, *Upanishad*?¹⁴ Might you move out of—or mesh **whattling** into—any or all traditions of anaphatic prayer; might you move out of—and not mesh into or mess with—your local tradition of commonsense eclecticism, to take your lonely stand on a search to “fuse into a single explanation”¹⁵ your life and times?

¹⁰ Place that horrid decision in the context of the reflections on *dread* in *CWL* 18, *Phenomenology and Logic*.

¹¹ “Still, even with talent, knowledge makes a slow, if not a bloody entrance.” *Insight*, 210.

¹² *Method in Theology*, 260.

¹³ Mentioned at the conclusion of the previous essay.

¹⁴ *Upa*: near; *ni*: devotedly; *shad*: sitting.

¹⁵ *Insight*, 610, line 9: the end of that great 60910 paragraph. Note that the explanation and the Explanation are practical inner words.

Read then, THEN, into the patterns of your Clasped molecules your towering challenge to commonsense eclecticism, hearing Lonergan's slighted alignment with the Word:¹⁶

"Theoretical understanding, then, seeks to solve problems, to erect syntheses, to embrace the universe in a single view."¹⁷

The embrace now, of course, is to be within the beginnings of functional research into the meaning of that absolutely supernatural embrace, that Clasp, that is pointed to, Boyer-wise, in the foundational prayer, "Double You Three in me, in all, Clasp, Cherishing, Calling, Craving, Christing," a prayer that is to drive us as a Tower Community to share a common inner word that weaves a full pilgrim heuristics round our hope.

Double You Three, **W₃**: the heuristic becomes one with the prayer and the pursuit, *Hound of Heaven* brisk in puppy's tale.¹⁸

So, I cut short a too-easy difficult swing into a long commentary on this piece of *Insight* by moving quickly through some phrases in the fourteenth chapter that seed fresh functional research. We can slowly, cyclically, savor that **W₃** is a massively new "symbolic indication of the total range of possible experience."¹⁹ It "proceeds by cajoling or forcing attention"²⁰ in a new effective cyclic dynamic. And, thirdly, we can savor the failed page and a half, certainly known by Lonergan

¹⁶ See *Song of Songs* 1:7. The Bride's puzzle: "Tell me, then, you whom my heart loves: Where will you lead your flock to graze, where will you rest it at noon? That I may no more wander like a vagabond beside the flocks of your companions." See note 18.

¹⁷ *Insight*, 442.

¹⁸ "I fled Him, down the nights and down the days; / I fled Him down the arches of the years; I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways / Of my own mind ..." the beginning of *The Hound of Heaven*, by Francis Thompson. The giant problem of moving beyond the puppy-hood of the axial period is for poets and mystics to venture down the labyrinthine ways of the Faith-filled mind to find the manner in which the Trinitarian Clasp, Cherishing and Calling – Cauling – weave His story and my story, history and our story, into an intimate Craving for Christing quite beyond the mystic or poetic articulations of the past two millennia. Spoke and Clasp bracket a Symphony moving everlastingly into greater beauty. Kataphatic living is to transform poetic expression, and even the reading of prior expressions: "See how he comes, leaping on the mountains I am a wall, and my breasts represent its towers. And in his eyes I have found true peace." *Song of Songs*, 2: 8; 8: 9-10, *The Jerusalem Bible* translation.

¹⁹ *Insight*, 421.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 423.

as such, with its seven points, beginning “First, then, in its general form, the transition is a deduction”²¹ and ending with a comment on the frustrating of development, in the absence of which “the science and the common sense of any age risks taking on the appearance of a mummy that would preserve for all time Greek science and medieval common sense.”²² Instead of Thomas’s *Quaestio Prima* there is to be a foundationless cyclic global enterprise massively revising the answer to the question “what is science?”

So we jump to Lonergan’s pause over that question, ‘what is science?’ in the concluding section 4.6 of this chapter, titled “Scientific Method and Philosophy.” The new perspective shifts that pause into a massively new context, but I do not wish to pursue that issue further here. What I wish to do is simply end by supplying an exercise that asks you to handle Robert John Russell’s suggested diagrammed dynamic by musing over its relationship to **W**₃, and—a decent hint here—**W**₄.²³ I place the double diagram in an Appendix, and add a few further comments.

I have given failing, slight and slightable pointers to a cyclic intake of, infolding of, methods—including methods of living and praying—into the 8-fold geohistorical embrace. I would hope that you are nudged into a startling re-reading of chapter 14 of *Insight*. Where might that re-reading lead? Well, at least there is that other 14 start, the 14th chapter of *Futurology Express*, about reaching Towns, Gowns, and Clowns, of drawing a parallel with the slow patient study of water of the last century, or perhaps—a nice twist here!—turning from the entry into the first functional specialty in such a topic as eschatology and swinging, the whole Lonergan group, into the eighth functional specialty and its outreach C₉, to give a nudge to present politics and economics. Might this not be a paradigmatic step towards a redemption of philosophy and theology? So I conclude with an anecdote about Lonergan’s view of reaching for perfection,

²¹ *Ibid.*, 424.

²² *Ibid.*, 426.

²³ These **Words** are listed in *Prehumus 2*, “Metagrams and Metaphysics” (available at: <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/prehumous-02.pdf>).

an aside in a lecture on economics during his first Boston presentation of spring 1978. His view echoed—but freshly and personally—the stand expressed in the summer of 1953. [? Or of 1937: did I do all possible? Absurd !] “You reach perfection by trying to eliminate the major obstacle to it in your life.”²⁴

The major obstacle to present theology in the Lonergan tradition is the slighting of Lonergan’s road to its redemptive effectiveness. And what is the major flaw in your own method in theology, in your personal method in metaphysics, in your me-thought? **Hurry**: for we have settling in so neatly to kill off the latest blossom of Christian Philosophy.

APPENDIX

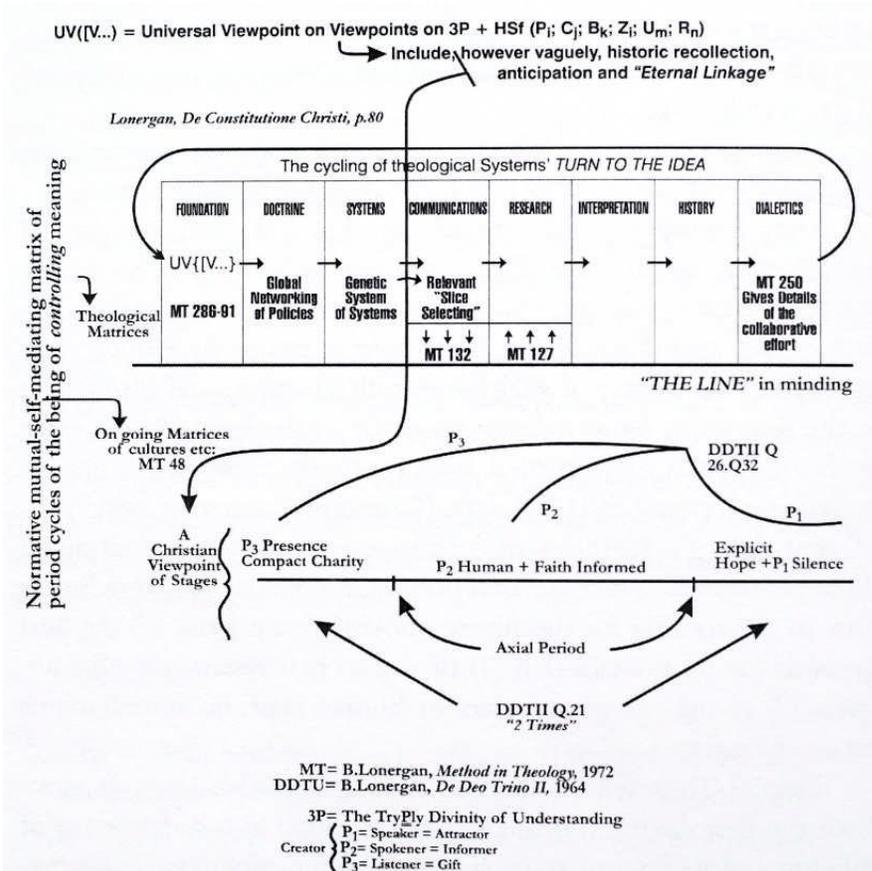
The exercise brings to mind a previous effort at the end of the second chapter of *Process: Introducing Themselves to Young Christian Minds*.²⁵ Such exercises are vital to leaving behind the academic disciplines of theology and tackling the tough third way. Here there should be no **hurry** but the patience of serious undergraduate work. But enough! Here you are: the **W₃** diagram followed by Russell’s diagram for “Creative Mutual Interaction.” The smaller exercise is your effort to detect the flawed grounds for his claims about its worth.²⁶ The two ‘squares’ symbolize theology and science, and six arrows connect them: 6, 7, and 8 go from theology to science; (1,2), (3,4), 5 go from science to theology. But the larger exercise is to muse seriously towards seeing how Russell’s effort might lead to a fuller grasp of **W₃**. The aim of the exercise, of course, is to push you towards that fuller grasp of **W₃**; or, for some perhaps, it is a beginning of asking, what is this X called functional collaboration?

²⁴ I quote from memory from that morning of 35 years ago. Later research will, no doubt, modify the details of Lonergan’s expression.

²⁵ See end of note 16 in *Futurology* 7, “Time and Eternity.”

²⁶ His claims are presented summarily in pages 72-75 but obviously run through the book. I refrain here from offering anything other than his general claim on page 72: “I call this method ‘creative mutual interaction’ because CMI is truly interactive: it not only includes five distinct paths from science to theology but in a rare move in the theology-science dialogue it also identifies three different paths back from theology to science.”

W₃



Creative Mutual Interaction

