

SURF 5

Cosmopolis and Functional Differentiations

Philip McShane

We meet in Halifax, July, 6-10, 2009, to struggle for an initial operating perspective on the **Project: Global Functional Collaboration**.¹ We cannot expect miracles but we can hope for a modest beginning. Part of that modest beginning is to ingest seriously the shift to conceiving functional collaboration as geared towards fulfilling the methodological characteristics of cosmopolis sketched by Lonergan.² The conceiving should reach towards some fantasy of functional collaboration as involving, in its maturity, unknown differentiations of consciousness, including differentiations of expression. Can you imagine a sentence taken out of its context in, say, interpretation, as identifiably different from a sentence taken out of the sixth specialty? And certainly, operating in such an imagined differentiated fashion is quite beyond our present competence. Yet the goal is to express ourselves with such precision, sentence by sentence, within any specialty. The goal is to thus facilitate the baton-exchange to the next specialty.³ And all the thinking and expressing is to be dominated by the heuristics

¹The statement of the Project is in the *Lonergan Newsletter* of December 2008, and also on the first page of SURF 2. And, up-front my apologies for the abundant footnoting: I am trying to keep the essay short, yet give a spread of leads. The case for initiating functional collaboration, for a cyclic fusion of effort, is made without the notes.

²The second part of *Joistings 22*, "Reviewing Mathews' *Lonergan's Quest*, and Ours," focuses on this.

³The baton-exchange structure is symbolized in the diagram W5, one of those reference below in note X. It is given in a fuller context, as Figure 1, in P. McShane, "The Importance of Rescuing Insight", p.204 of *The Importance of Insight. Essays in Honour of Michael Vertin*, edited by John J.Liptay and David S.Liptay, University of Toronto Press, 2007. The article addresses especially those in the Lonergan community who are moving into retirement:"The Project" could get a significant boost from their participation

of the terminal value: the heuristics, for example, expressed so briefly in SURF 6.

A key element in our fantasy forward is to envisage the possession of and by a Standard Model in the culture of collaboration: the image of the Tower of Able is helpful.⁴ To do this envisaging is to take seriously Lonergan's pointers on the second page of *Method in Theology* about imitating the successful sciences. The elementary science, physics, is dominated by a Standard Model, as is the less elementary science, chemistry, with its Periodic Table. Taking that seriously warrants a fresh reading of *Method in Theology*: then one may begin to see present theology as consisting, not of a dominant standard model, but of a shambles of descriptive and comparative discussions.

The successful cycling of functional collaboration is to generate that standard model, perhaps in a century. I am not here talking about one or two isolated thinkers: I am talking about the community of reflective culture that reaches, in explanatory committedness, "to embrace the universe in a single view."⁵ I am talking, too, of members of reflective culture in any area. Physics does in fact present an image of a successful science, since the Standard Model is shared by its non-tower equivalent of The Tower, but it is in desperate need of the lift of generalized empirical method and functional collaboration. However, that is not our immediately topic.⁶

But I would note a weakness in my suggestion of the previous paragraph: very few of the first three or four generations of Lonergan students have any serious

⁴Page 205 of the work cited in the previous note gives the original source of the Tower image: The flat lay-out of the functional specialties is easily lifted into a suggestive three dimensional image of spiraling progress.

⁵*Insight* 417[442]. Lonergan's own commitment to such an embrace is the central topic of Pierrot Lambert and Philip McShane, *Bernard Lonergan: His Life and Leading Ideas*, Part 3, Chapter 1, to appear in 2009.

⁶Pointers toward the needed restructuring of physics are given in P. McShane, "Elevating *Insight*. Space-Time as Paradigm Problem", *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 19 [2001], 203-229.

experience of science.⁷ How, then, are we to seriously benefit from the parallel with a successful science? A suggestion I have made for decades - and it is all the more important at present - is that tackling Lonergan's economic theory would bridge that gap in competence for the present. It is a brilliant theory, even though it has attracted no attention so far: a community that would rise to being versed in it would be a beginning of attention-getting for a critically-needed emergence of scientific economics.⁸

A better presentation by "Lonergan teachers" of Lonergan's work in *Insight* might solve the problem by attracting an audience from science, but the problem recurs there: most teachers are capable only of *haute vulgarization* when it comes to presenting *Insight*. Still, it would help if present teachers homed in on the flaws of common sense

⁷One may think, perhaps, of four generations of Lonergan students, with birth dates before [1] 1933, [2] 1953, [3]1973, [4] 1993. The first generation is a shrinking group which includes myself. The second generation is appealed to in the article mentioned in note 3 above. The third generation is the crisis group, misled into a low-level continuity with past patterns of philosophy and theology by earlier generations, who were regularly within the clerical tradition of commonsense theology. The International Lonergan Florida Conference of 1970 was dominated by such earlier groups, with little grip on science and its revolutions. The problem facing the present generation is to sense the mounting decay and selectivism of Lonerganism, and to break towards the world of serious explanation, but to do so in a manner that allows them to survive the present systems. As Lonergan wrote to me in 1968 regarding Oxford, "give the guy what he wants". But, even doing that, one can [a] focus on detailed suggestions in Lonergan regarding up-dating scientific understanding; [b] cut back on comparative analyses. On the later, see note 39 below. Then, of course, [c], take seriously his final brilliant methodological insight, but do this cautiously.

⁸*SURF 2*, on the present global economic crisis, is my most recent set of pointers on economics. Lonergan's view of economic flows and credit and democratic creativity is a world that is quite foreign to present organized ignorance, stupidity, and greed. Perhaps the basic scandal of current Lonergan studies is its neglect of those answers of 1942. The scandal that occupies me in the present Project and essay is the forty-year neglect of his solution to the problem of cosmopolis. On the functional of economics as bridging the gap, see "The Values of Lonergan's Economics for Lonergan Students", chapter 1 of the Website book, *The Redress of Poise*.

and of *haute vulgarization*.⁹ The difficulty of that homing in, being genuinely at home,¹⁰ is one we must face in our gathering at Halifax, July 2009, and in the next decades, but it is as well to indicate the central *Insight*-text on the matter. It is the second rule of metaphysical equivalence. I am not going to enlarge on Lonergan's vigorous criticism of the related "myth-making"¹¹ mentality here, but it is valuable to note that the transition is helped by virtual expression of it: "the transposition is effected formally or virtually."¹² The virtual transposition is aided by a serious ingestion of such a series of metawords as I invented over the years.¹³ So, for example, one's use of the words "phantasm" or "dream" would be tempered by the first metaword's drawing one's attention explicitly to the physics, chemistry and biology involved in the corresponding realities.

⁹In Volume 6 of the *Collected Works*, Lonergan is quite brutally clear about the character of *haute vulgarization*: see pages 121,155.. See also, *Topics in Education*, 145.

¹⁰See note 5 above, and notes 36 and 39 below. In the sense meant here "it is quite difficult to be at home in transcendental method." (*Method in Theology*, 14).

¹¹*Insight* 505[528].

¹²*Insight*, 504[528].

¹³A helpful context here is P.McShane, "Metaphysical Control of Meaning", *Method. Journal of Lonergan Studies* 23 [2005]. The Metawords, **Wi**, are scattered throughout the Website books mentioned in note 26 below. A compact presentation of them is given in Prehumous 2. In all this effort I am simply following Lonergan's pointer: "The comprehension of everything in a unified whole can be either formal or virtual. It is virtual when one is habitually able to answer readily and without difficulty, or at least 'without tears', a whole series of questions right up to the last 'why?'. Formal comprehension, however, cannot take place without a construct of some sort. In this life we are able to understand something only by turning to phantasm; but in larger and more complex questions it is impossible to have a suitable phantasm unless the imagination is aided by some sort of diagram. Thus, 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." (B.Lonergan, *The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, University of Toronto Press, 2002, 151.

But as yet I have not touched on our core difficulty: pushing practically for functionality. There is my hope, of course, of students of Lonergan being forced towards functionality by other disciplines operating within a minimalist view of functional specialization.¹⁴ I have spelled this out previously, so here I only note that it is a division of labour based on needs emergent within any discipline, and not on an analysis that is grounded in self-appreciation.¹⁵ I suspect that there are to be decent statistics of that emergence in the next century. But what of the task internal to theology and philosophy? That **task**, I would suggest, is to be faced in patchwork fashion.

I begin with my own **role** in this patching process.¹⁶ I begin thus because the role is one which generates a random collection of spear-headings. I have been making such collections or suggestions for decades but the new role throws light both on the mature functional collaboration and on facets of the illustrations produced here of such

¹⁴Karl Rahner implicitly recognized this when he responded to the *Gregorianum* article mentioned below in note 19. Karl Rahner, “Die theologische Methodologie Lonergan’s scheint mir so generisch zu sein, dass sie eigentlich auf jede Wissenschaft passt”, Karl Rahner, “Kritische Bemerkungen zu B.J.F.Lonergan’s Aufsatz: ‘Functional Specialties in Theology’”, *Gregorianum* 51(1971), 537: “Lonergan’s theological methodology seems to me to be so generic that it actually suits every science.”

¹⁵I discussed this minimalism in chapter 1 of the Website book, *Method in Theology: Revisions and Implementations*. See also chapter 3 of my, *Pastkeynes Pastmodern Economics. A Fresh Pragmatism*, Axial Publishing, 2002.

¹⁶Boldfacing **task** and **role** above indicate my interest in relating our thinking to the display of *Method in Theology*, 48. We are turning towards bringing forth very slowly a global **institution** effectively transformative of the lesser institutions of government, economics, education, etc. This short essay cannot be comprehensive on the matter, so I draw attention to my own role here. A fuller perspective on possible and probable roles is given by Russell Baker in “Rising to Lonergan’s Challenge: A Three-Stage Proposal for Implementing Functional Specialization” (see the Website, libertybelle.ca). Russell has suggestions there of significant pairings. Initially, perhaps, we must stumble along in accidental groupings. But, if we are to get the show in the road, we must take time - that we do not seem to have - to reach out to one another, willing to share messy pre-dawn collaborations. See the final footnote of the present essay.

strategies. What is that role?¹⁷ It is my adopted role as functional researcher. First, it throws light on mature specialization because I have had the luck of being slowly tuned into the Standard Model of a future functionality. I came to Lonergan's work in 1956 with a background of graduate work in physics, and mathematics. I spread my interests into the biological sciences in the next decade and, in 1968, Lonergan nudged me into economics. A musical background allowed me to advert to the need for functionality in musicology in 1969,¹⁸ before the publication of the *Gregorianum* article.¹⁹ And so on.

But what was a matter of luck for me is to become normative and normal in later cultures of collaboration. I can say of my rambles in various areas what Lonergan said about interpretation and a structured investigation of meaning. "Is this a possible project? Might I suggest that the section on stages of meaning in Chapter Three offers a beginning? If transcendental method coupled with a few books by Cassirer and Snell could make this beginning, why might not transcendental method coupled with the at once extensive and precise knowledge of many exegetes in many fields yield more?"²⁰ And this rambling of mine through some few books throws light on the few listed topics below and facets of our approach to them.

I have generated reasonably adequate heuristic images, and the hints I give are controlled by them in my expression of the standard model reached by Lonergan. The research zone I emphasize initially - a key twist - is research into Lonergan's own

¹⁷It is a pre-scientific role. Looking back over these past fifty years I would say that I have been puttering in the role of external relating within what is to become the eighth specialty. Like the rest of Lonergan's disciples I have failed to have a serious stab at functional work. But at 77 I am willing to have a shot at it, in whatever company we can muster.

¹⁸The paper, "Metamusic and Self-Meaning" was presented at the International Florida Conference of 1970. It is available as chapter 2 of the Website book [published 1976], *The Shaping of the Foundations*.

¹⁹Lonergan's article "Functional Specialties in Theology" was published in *Gregorianum* 50 (1969), 485-505.

²⁰*Method in Theology*, 173.

writings. First, very simply, there are zones of significance evidently neglected.²¹ Secondly, there are specialized issues. Both help, in different ways, towards fostering the standard model in those willing to follow up the research-pointing. I emphasize that it is a matter of pointing, and I follow the analogy of good physics research here. The researcher in physics, up to date on the standard model, is hunting for anomalies. But each identified anomaly is passed on to the community of theoreticians, with regularly only a suspicion of how to proceed. But I do not wish to venture further here into illustrations from physics: they would be unfamiliar to most of my readers.

Turning now to the first type in theology or philosophy I think immediately of two zones that have occupied me in these past decades. The two zones, indeed, occupied me sufficiently to generate lengthy treatment of each that are suggestive of serious theoretic involvement. There is the zone symbolized by **250**, the page number of the strategic discussion of dialectic method in *Method in Theology*. I devoted 200 pages of *Sofdawares* and *Quodlibets* to rambles around that single page. Then there is the page of *Insight* that contains the paragraph which begins "Study of the organism"²² To that paragraph I devoted a 300 page ramble of 41 essays, *Field Nocturnes*. In neither case was there a push for a coherent account: that is the challenge to the community of interpreters.

Next I illustrate the second type of anomaly, from my own recent work. My

²¹I find the volume *Lonergan's Hermeneutics. Its Development and Application*, edited by Ben F. Meyer and Sean E. McEvenue (The Catholic University of America Press, Washington .D.C., 1989) amusingly but sadly symbolic of such evident neglect. In our gathering at Concordia we never got seriously either to the hermeneutics of *Insight* or to the significance of functional collaboration. But the neglect in other gatherings before and since is pretty obvious. I would say that at the heart of the matter is the failure to take note of the drive from *Insight* chapter 15, section 7 forward through the next two chapters, a product of the pressured summer of 1953, towards the beginning of an effective metaphysics. The first paragraph of section 7 includes the clear claim "to prepare our statement of the integral heuristic structure that we have named metaphysics, attention must now be directed to genetic method."

²²*Insight* 464[489].

researching threw up two suggestive pieces in Lonergan: one relating to knowing's natural desire,²³ the other relating to conceiving money adequately.²⁴ In a mature cyclic collaboration, each of these would be picked up, with joy and surprise, by a relevant group of interpreters. A difference is expected to move round the cycle, shaking the standard model into a slightly new shape, ending with new street-patterns in the 10,000 villages. I say no more about these two suggestions here: pointers regarding them are elsewhere.²⁵ But it is important to try to resonate in fantasy with some shabby notion of a "mature cyclic collaboration", again through an analogy with a successful science

²³"The pure desire to know is ineffable" is a quiet remark in Thesis 12 of *The Incarnate Word*, not yet published in English yet: I was reading the Helfing translation. Such reading has the character of research, similar to reading the output of the new 17 km cyclotron: one comes with an up-to-date perspective and notices an anomaly. One then has to characterize the anomaly to the theoretical community sufficiently to give them leads to the required, but as yet unknown, shift in theory, then in history etc. The context of the research is always significant and relevant. In physics, tracks related to Higgs phenomena might be sought; in my case I was researching mysticism. For the research and the context see *Prehumous 8*: "Foundational Prayer V: The Place of Mysticism".

²⁴Remarks similar to those made in the previous note are warranted here. In this case I was researching hedge-fund and CDS (credit default swaps) operations. The researching needs to be done within the full richness of Lonergan's economics. Only within that context does the relevance of his remarks - at the conclusion of his 1942 text, *For A New Political Economy* - on money as, not a commodity, but public bookkeeping, leap to the fore. The researcher has to give the pointers to the interpreting community that they may nudge forward the needed lifts of precision through the full cycle. "It is a vast task. It means thinking out afresh our ideas of markets, prices, international trade, investments, return on capital. Above all it means thinking out afresh our ideas of economic directives and controls." (*For A New Political Economy*, 105). These suggestions of Lonergan's 1942 typescript find no audience, of course, in the present crisis. Governments and their illiterate economists putter along in the same unscientific anti-democratic modes, and we wait, bank-trapped, for Obama to split the waters of the debt sea. See SURF 4, "The Global Financial Crisis."

²⁵Recall note 21 above, on dismal failure in focusing. The task for interpreters in both the cases presented is to face up to the long theoretic climb and to lift democratic thinking towards a creative replacement of established idiocies like the American car industries. It is a huge task of functional collaboration. Add the fullest context pointed to in the final footnote of this essay. Centralist paternalism just wont cut it.

such as physics.

Perhaps a good place to start thinking about mature operating is with Lonergan's preliminary notion at the beginning of *Method in Theology*, "a method is a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results." This is a pretty optimistic statement for theology, but it is true for normal science. In such science everyone at "the cutting edge" is on the ball, waiting for the equivalent of traces of the Higgs particle. The people in physics are not talking on the side to the flat-earth society, or even to the string-theory people. There is a communal recognition of a potential lift. So, for example, the battle on 250 is not with views outside the community but battles identifiable in their subtlety only within the community with an almost-common UV + GS.²⁶ This is hard to envisage at present, since the standard model is only a hope. That was Lonergan's problem in tackling the writing of *Method*. "What am I to do? I can't put all of *Insight* into chapter one of *Method*."²⁷ But he is unshakably clear on the character of the effective standard model of the future. His disciples have dodged the climb towards it, in themselves and in their students, for fifty years.

Our strategy seeks to initiate that climb, even through embarrassment.²⁸ As a functional researcher I draw attention to both large problems of interpretation and small promising details of advance.

²⁶I cannot possibly enlarge on this topic here. See the two recent Website books, *Method in Theology: Revisions and Implementations* and *Lonergan's Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry*. UV is perhaps identifiable as a tentative universal viewpoint. GS is the cyclic lift given that viewpoint by the ongoing genesis of a geohistorical systematics, a fusion of economics and theology and other disciplines. So, one gets a glimpse of a meaning for Fusionism, a cyclic comprehensive control of meaning that invites humanity to "fuse into a single explanation" (*Insight*, 587[610]).

²⁷A remark to me in conversation in the mid-1960s.

²⁸"Doctrines that are embarrassing will not be mentioned in polite company." (*Method in Theology*, 299)

The community of interpreters is thus discomforted into a new bent, mutually self-mediating in so far as the community is open and luminous about “all that is lacking.”²⁹ “The interpreter’s initial knowledge of the object is just inadequate. He will come to know it only in so far as he pushes the self-correcting process of learning to a revolution in his own outlook. He can succeed in acquiring that habitual understanding of an author that spontaneously finds his wave-length and locks on to it, only after he has effected a radical change in himself.”³⁰ So, in the case of the two refined pointers above, the group of economists, concerned about the muddles about money as a commodity rather than a book-keeping promise, have to get back freshly to a square one of two credit-worthy flows.³¹ And those interested in the deepest human reaches need to get to grips with the heuristics of the global exigence.³² Thus, the detailed suggestions lift the community back to the evidently neglected, our first type of focus.

But what is that lift, and how is it to work? I glance through my abundant sketchings for the continuation of this essay - sketchings that point, rather, to a large book or indeed a large community - and shift paradoxically to the need to halt here. I will only say that the task of “Interpreting Lonergan” bubbled up slowly for me as a subtle and an effective strategy of lifting the Lonergan tradition out of its rut of “effete”³³ descriptive, undifferentiated, and comparative scholarliness to the beauty and

²⁹Insight 536[559]. The gap in such perception is related there to lack of attunement to scientific progress.

³⁰*Method in Theology*, 161.

³¹I have noted the required strategic elementary exercises in various places: e.g. *Prehumous I*, “Teaching Highschool Economics. A Common-Quest Manifesto” and *Field Nocturnes Cantower 46*, “An Effective Strategy of Economic Reform”.

³²It is for the community of interpreters to link together Lonergan’s various shots at specifying the real human exigence. A starting place would be the index on *Exigence in Phenomenology and Logic*.

³³“... with no task proportionate to their training. They become effete”, *Method in Theology*, 99. Sections in *Method* lifts the discussion of decay in *Insight* into the present

efficiency³⁴ of a global community committed “to the joyful, courageous, whole-hearted, yet intelligently controlled performance of the tasks set by a world order in which the problem of evil is not suppressed but transcended.”³⁵ It has subtle feed-back potential in twisting the task of interpretation into a larger realism which yet is homely.³⁶ How does one interpret a friend, within the perspective of *Method* chapter 7? Realistically, one listens to him or her in the context of where they have come from, where they are going. That realism lifts one forward - or should I not say back? - to the context of *Insight* chapter 17 and to the context of developmental considerations that is Lonergan’s take-off point in *Insight* towards pragmatic metaphysics.³⁷

But does it lift one forward or back? Think now of your own previous view of these two chapters of Lonergan, if indeed you have had a chance to think of how they compare and relate. *Method in Theology*, chapter 7, and section 3 of *Insight*, chapter 17, are not at all obvious in their connected.³⁸ How easily is it going to be for you and me and us to fuse them into a single explanatory heuristic? Indeed, the question, seriously brooded on and molecularized, can be wonderfully symbolic of the incompleteness of

institutional theological context. See also 299, 317.

³⁴The key reference here is *Topics in Education*, 160, line 16. Methodology is to reach efficiency, unity and beauty through group efficiency.

³⁵*Insight* 723-4[745].

³⁶Relate the present pointing to notes 10 and 39. The context is *Method in Theology*, 350-1, “it has to be at home in modern science”, generating a “systematic theology that is elitist”. The homeliness is to be positional and positional. See, on this both *SURF* 8, “A Secure Understanding of Real Fenomena” and *Cantower* 9, “Position, Poisition, Protopossession”. That secure communal understanding will reveal the fatuousness of much of present comparative work. From Lonergan’s perspective, *Comparison* is a precise inner-enterprize of the dialectic community (see *Method in Theology*, 250). Light-weight comparisons, of course, may occur in Communications’ bending towards external relating.

³⁷See the first paragraph of *Insight*, Chapter 15, section 7, where he makes this point.

³⁸We get back to this in quite elementary fashions in *SURF* 7, “Tackling Lonergan on Interpretation”.

and in our accepting the friendly fusionism of Lonergan, that would invite 7 billion of us, present pilgrims, “to fuse into a single explanation.”³⁹

“Is my proposal utopian? It asks merely for creativity, for an interdisciplinary theory.”⁴⁰ We find out by clambering up the foothills, clinging to virtualities.⁴¹ But why not glimpse compactly the terminal value⁴² in SURF 6, a glimpse that would add to a motivation to sow the seeds of the needed and missing **institution**, with its **roles** and **tasks** to be set by us⁴³ into world order?

³⁹*Insight* 587[610].

⁴⁰Lonergan, “Healing and Creating in History” *A Third Collection*, 108; *Macrodynamic Economics*, 106.

⁴¹I already referred to virtualities above (see the text at note 12 and the discussion in note 13). In reaching for the standard model it is well to cling to Lonergan’s description of what I call the “comeabout attitude”: “So it comes about that the extroverted subject visualizing extensions and experiencing duration gives place to the subject oriented to the objective of the unrestricted desire to know and affirming beings differentiated by certain conjugate potencies, forms, and acts grounding certain laws and frequencies” (*Insight*, 514[537]). The communal realization of that, through the pressure of cyclic collaboration, is a century away.

⁴² Again, I have in mind the diagram of *Method in Theology*, 48. A fuller heuristic of terminal value requires a much more elaborate perspective on eschatology, the seeds of which are in Lonergan’s work.

⁴³“The specific difference of human history is that among the probably possibilities is a sequence of operative insights in which men grasp possible schemes of recurrence and take the initiative in bringing about the material and social conditions that make these schemes concretely possible, probable, and actual Common sense has to aim at being subordinate to a human science that is concerned, to adapt a phrase of Marx, not only with knowing history but also with directing it The challenge of history is for man progressively to restrict the realm of chance or fate and progressively to enlarge the realms of conscious grasp and deliberate choice” *Insight* 227-8[252-3]. The next two billion years is on our side.