

## SURF 12:

**Tackling Lonergan on Interpretation****Introduction: Starting U Reaching Forward**

In SURF O: “Prologue”, I pointed, in the conclusion, towards this particular essay as a good place to start if you are interested but confused or only a beginner. I might say that this SURF essay does actually surf! The last two paragraphs of SURF 5 are a context here, but don’t bother with that initially. I simply quote the end of the second last paragraph there as a starting point to our surfing. For convenience of reference let us call it Paragraph A. Here it is:

“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.”<sup>1</sup>

Now let us jump back, away, from that piece of erudition to the first six words, “how does one interpret a friend”? How does one interpret an acquaintance, an enemy, a date? This is a very simple existential question but it can be a battle to cherish it in a truncated academy and culture. We shall wind round that question of cherishing in a surfing sense both here and everlastingly. If you like, the focus of this final essay of the SURF series is; What is the meaning of Surfing? The first lecture that I ever heard from Lonergan homed in on the meaning of surfing. What is it to surf Einstein? *Scientific American* is surfing, and to the non-scientist it is *haute vulgarization*. Good classroom surfing is another matter: at its best, it is *haute vulgarization* lifted to the level of psychic orientation towards the exercises necessary to human growth in the associated area of endeavor. An adequate presentation of the question, How does one interpret an acquaintance?, would be in line with this. But note now how we might twist this question and the adequacy issue round ourselves in a surfing that has a chance of lifting our game in meeting our

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<sup>1</sup>See Surf 5, at note 37.

acquaintance, Bernard Lonergan. Does a re-reading of the paragraph above help? Let us surf around a set of re-readings in the sections to follow.

My first effort at presenting Fusionism made the second section here a type of overview that identified its incarnation as a future condition of humanity in which it became the heartbeat of culture, reflective and popular. But this is just too much of a surfing leap, presenting a utopia, a nonsensical vision. So, eventually I placed that consideration at the end. Perhaps I could say that the best attitude to have to what I write here is to think of it in terms of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*: its ending is the context of its beginning, so that a re-read rights the glory of the *riverrun past Eve and Adam*.

But, forget the glory for the present and think of these next five sections as something like a university calendar description of levels of the study of a subject called Fusionism, a suggested revision of the present study of philosophy.

## 1. Fusion 101.

What can I possibly say in a page about this course? I taught an elementary version of the course for twenty years, and providentially the paragraph to comment on it is already given, above. It is worth repeating here, for what is now a fresh reading. Indeed, each section to follow represents a fresh reading, and the freshness corresponds to the freshness that occurs in moving up through the years of good physics. Newton's law is still there, but in Physics 401 it is in the world of Schwarzschild.<sup>2</sup> Here, then, is our central paragraph **A** again:

“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.

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<sup>2</sup>For a Physics 401 survey version see Ian D. Lawrie, *A Unified Tour of Theoretical Physics*, Institute of Physics Publishing, Bristol and Philadelphia, 1998pb. It will be replaced eventually by a Fusion version. For Schwarzschild work in a fuller context see S.W. Hawking and G.F.R. Ellis, *The Large Scale Structure of Space-Time*, Cambridge University Press, 1999, 149ff. This latter work very much needs the Fusion context, where primary and secondary determinations are to be luminous.

in *Insight*. towards pragmatic metaphysics.”

That is not the way I posed the question to the young ladies in Mt.St.Vincent University over those two decades. Rather, we faced - usually on a Friday - the problem they faced on Friday evening as they headed out, dressed to kill, seeking Cosmo Polis. We would return to the Friday searching on Monday, and so on. We spent weeks mulling over ourselves and the regularly-failed Candidates for Cosmo Polis. The candidates were all too regularly inattentive to perfume, uninterested in mood, deceitful sons of, lacking creative planning, short on responsibility.<sup>3</sup>

The one point I wish to make here about this is that the mulling was focused on the data: our own loneliness. We had no interest in Aristotle or Kant, Sartre or Lonergan. We were venturing slowly into a serious appreciation of the person reflected in our morning mirror.

## 2. Fusion 201.

But if you are tuned to that paragraph **A** and indeed, to any version of the course, you will note that the comments in the previous section did not reach into the paragraph. We were doing Newtonian Fusionism, not Einstein's. You get a concrete revealing pointer towards this by going back to your own reading of the chapter on Interpretation in *Method in Theology*. For most of you, I would say that you did not notice the issue of **context** that screams for the larger view of *Insight*, chapter 17, section 3. Listening and speaking in context is a sophisticated achievement, and its understanding - the layered, objective of Fusion - is and was quite beyond the first year effort of tasting<sup>4</sup> the fundamental orientations in oneself. With a full year course, one might get as far as noting the general problem of what I call effective telling, meeting each other, biography

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<sup>3</sup>Two points need to be made here. First, the inclusion of what seems a fifth transcendental orientation may strike you as odd. I justify it in Appendix A of *Phenomenology and Logic*. Add *Method in Theology*, 53, where the transcendental “be intelligent” is bent towards the future. Add the simple fact that one cannot be responsible without a plan. The second point relates to pedagogy: noting the absence of transcendental life in another is a neat way of finding how one is oneself.

<sup>4</sup>I am thinking here of Lonergan's reference to Hopkins (see *A Third Collection*, 132), but I would note the lift of context involved by the series of 41 essays, *Field Nocturnes*.

to biography, in history.<sup>5</sup> Cosmo Polis might turn out to be a promising young Chinese man from Dalhousie University, or - for the lesbians in the class - a delightful lady-friend from Kenya. Then context, colour, Canadian and sexual clan-bias enter in: how is one to tell one's mate or mother of ones' reach for life? So, we find ourselves in the larger world introduced by facing the context, the contexts, of telling. Spontaneity struggles in its darkness, and perhaps one moves to unenlightened reflective interpretations of oneself in one's lonesomeness. "It would be a matter of considerable difficulty to work out a reflective interpretation that satisfied a single audience,"<sup>6</sup> even when the audience is oneself!

How does one express oneself effectively to mother, mate or mirror-image? "An expression is a verbal flow governed by a practical insight (F) that depends upon a principal insight (a) to be communicated, upon a grasp (B) of the anticipated audience's habitual intellectual development ©), and upon a grasp (D) of the deficiencies in insight (E) that have to be overcome if the insight (A) to be communicated."<sup>7</sup>

And where from the principle insight (A)? It is not enough to keep a diary.<sup>8</sup> So you find the need, and meet it elementarily in the course of the course, of coming to grips with your story and that of your mates and ancestors and descendants.

Fusion 201 is evidently a tough climb to self- and cosmic- possession, a basic luminosity about human living in the making, biogenesis and phylogenesis.

### 3. Fusion 301.

I have no trouble in finding a paragraph - indeed, a sentence - to write a page about as I surf about Fusion 301. The principal insight (A) that you hope will control your talk to all

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<sup>5</sup>The central footnote, 23, of the central chapter, 4, of the book *The Redress of Poise* - available on the Website - places this problem in a fuller context.

<sup>6</sup>*Insight* 563[586].

<sup>7</sup>*Insight* 562[585].

<sup>8</sup>"A first step is a diary" (*Method in Theology*, 182). This begins Lonergan's 2-chapter reflection on History. I would note that these chapters need a massive lift into the context of functional collaboration. .

audiences has to be, somehow, existentially formulated by you in some multivalent way: in that sense, leading to what I might call a *pure formulation*. But what in heavens name are pure formulations? The result of some Freudian or Jungian or Kleinian analysis? So, we come to our **unhelpful** sentence, which we may call, for convenience of reference, Sentence **B**.

“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.”<sup>9</sup>

The unhelpful sentence pushes us into puzzling about the meaning of the phrase *universal viewpoint*. So, the meaning of *pure formulation* and the meaning of *universal viewpoint* are locked together. The general bias within us all, that eats our hearts out, has the death-wish of being told a meaning: tell me in simple words. It battles and prattles thus even about the much simpler area, where the meaning of *invariance* and the meaning of *general relativity* are locked together. The struggle for that meaning would be a topic in Physics 301. The struggle in both cases, Fusion 301 and Physics 301, is a tough reach for a core understanding. And tough love demands that I move now to give you an unhelpful word, let us call it Word **C: (about)**<sup>3</sup> .<sup>10</sup>

“Puleeze, .... what **is** this: ‘your general biased heart prompts’? .... get real, have a heart.” But I do have a heart, lonely to cherish slivers of understanding of the cosmic mystery’s heart. And that is your heart, hidden in description and haunted by axial truncation.

**(About)**<sup>3</sup> belongs in a Calendar description of Fusion 301 as *tensor* belongs in a Calendar description of Physics 301.

Here I would note that I am unsuccessfully interpreting the heart of a friend, who, in the spring of 1965, was desperate to interpret to a commonsense theological community what I talk of next as Fusion 401. I heard that desperation in Lonergan’s voice as he paced his room, a year later: “What am I to do? I can’t put all of *Insight* into chapter one!”

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<sup>9</sup>*Insight* 580[602].

<sup>10</sup>I cannot enter into this topic here. It is treated briefly in the Websit Book, *ChrISt in History*, chapter 2, section 2.

#### 4. Fusion 401.

We may think of this as a top-level undergraduate course that seeds forward, to new and startling meaning, that single sentence **B** and the single word **C** of the last section. But the key word in this section is *seeds* and it is key in a deeply ultimate - Ultimate - sense that we surf around elsewhere.<sup>11</sup> Here we can think concretely of the way Lonergan struggled and pondered his way to the seeding. Consider again that sentence **B** of the pressured summer of 1953. “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.”<sup>12</sup>

A couple of hundred pages later he types the word *collaboration* 29 times in ten pages: obviously collaboration is a must. Would the collaborators share something like the universal viewpoint so as to have a common world, where pure formulations would, “without difficulty or at least ‘without tears’”<sup>13</sup> get across. and round?

But now there is the wonder, for us, of the missing question: What if the audience was the community of reflective culture, collaborating in a fundamental division of labor? The refining question remained missing in Lonergan’s minding until 1965. Yet we may now see it there, in the global molecules of disciplinary muddlings, as we see the periodic table of chemistry in the muddles of chemistry and its journals before 1869.

Fusion 401 would invite its participants to see and seize, and be seized by that question’s answer.

#### 5. Fusion 501

What might Fusion 501 be? Think of it as related to the graduate and post-graduate drive

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<sup>11</sup>Briefly, in *Field Nocturnes CanTower 116*. “Desire Undistanced, Part 2: Phylogenesis” See the concluding comment in this essay and in *Surf Zero*.

<sup>12</sup>*Insight 580*[602].

<sup>13</sup>*The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, 151. Note the convenient ambiguity of the word *tears*.

that carries some few to membership in the frontline reach of a zone, be it physics or fusionism.<sup>14</sup> But I would have you, here and for a year, think of it in terms of a canon, for convenience called *Canon 3*, for that is what it is in Lonergan's 1953 struggle to redeem frontline work. So, I invite you to read another paragraph.

“Thirdly, there is a canon of successive approximation. 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. Accordingly, the fundamental need is for reliable principles of criticism that will select what is satisfactory and will correct what is unsatisfactory in any contributions that are made. With such principles the end of even a stupendous task is already somehow insight. On the other hand, without such principles, even enormous and indefinitely prolonged labors may merely move around in an inconclusive circle.”<sup>15</sup>

Instead of the inconclusive circle there is the cycling structure that is emergent in history,<sup>16</sup> identified and named by Lonergan: “a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results.” But now, I bring you to note the wondrous central progressive result of these next centuries: **Gems 2** winds relentlessly into the inconclusive circling of any discipline to make Fusion 101 or 201 or 301 or 401 or whatever, not Fusion, but X 101 or whatever, where X is a variable ranging over disciplines.<sup>17</sup> The **Childout**

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<sup>14</sup>The issue here is eventually to be simple, when what I call GEM2, generalized empirical method defined in *A Third Collection*, 141, the top lines, becomes a culture from kindergarden to graduate studies. See note 17 below.

<sup>15</sup>*Insight*, 588[610-11].

<sup>16</sup>See chapter 1 of *Method in Theology; Revisions and Implementations*, on the Website, of chapter 3 of *Pastkeynes Pastmodern Economics: A Fresh Pragmatism*, Axial Publications, 2002.

<sup>17</sup>See note 14 above and the following note here. Perhaps it is worthwhile adding the definition of generalized empirical method here, so that the proximity to the Childout Principle, stated in the next note, may allow the consideration of their complementarity. “Generalized empirical method operates on a combination of both the data of sense and the data of consciousness: it does not treat of objects without taking into account the corresponding operations of the subject; it does not treat of the subject's operations without taking into account

**Principle**<sup>18</sup> lifts school and college towards the second time of the temporal subject.<sup>19</sup>

This disciplinary and global fusion is the core topic of Fusion 501. It is an envisagement of the recurrent related operations of the Tower of Able.

## 6. Identifying Fusion

As I struggled with the problem in the Introduction - relocating the complex section 2 that would identify Fusion - the suggestion bubbled up of establishing the identity straight off, here, in the single word: *Fusionism*. No help at all you say? Well, pause with my suggested twists of imagination about this pert, opening word, this Pert word.<sup>20</sup> I am recalling now books and phrases that were useful in my own climb towards my grip on fusion and fusionism: or should I say, their grip on me? But not, now, just *Molecules of Emotion* but also **Molecules of Minding**, Flesh's reach.<sup>21</sup> I would, if you like, have Colette identify for you Fusionism.<sup>22</sup> What do I add by

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the corresponding objects.”

<sup>18</sup>The Principle is presented in various places. It underpins the implementation of the culture mentioned in notes 14 and 17. It is presented in a reasonably full context in *Cantower XCI*, “Functional Policy”. The principle states; “When teaching children geometry one is teaching children children”.

<sup>19</sup>The two times of the temporal subject is a topic of question 21 of Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics*, University of Toronto Press, 2007. See pages 404-5. The times can be considered either ontogenetically or phylogenetically.

<sup>20</sup>See the following note.

<sup>21</sup>*Molecules of Emotion* is the title of a book by Candace Pert: touchstone, New York, 1999. I discussed its significance in *Cantower IV*, “Molecules of Description and Explanation”. Molecules of Explanation is a general reference to deeper issues of the incarnation of explanatory meaning. I am indebted here to the doctorate work of Christine Jamieson at St. Paul's University, Ottawa, *The Significance of the Body in Ethical Discourse: Julia Kristeva's Contribution*. The problem is contextualized by *Field Nocturnes 1- 41*, my reflections on the Lonergan paragraph that begins “Study of the organism”(Insight 464[489]). I introduce the work of Christine Jamieson at notes 7 and 8 of Field Nocturne 23, and the fleshly mood of Colette is carried forward from there. See the next note.

<sup>22</sup>See the previous note. Kristeva has a three-volume work on Hannah Arendt, Melanie Klein, and Colette. The third volume is titled *Colette: the world's flesh* (translated by Jane Marie



adding **ism** to fusion? It names what is here or there all along, but now reaches for a self-luminosity, **in Spirit's molecules**. I mean, then, by Fusionism, not just another -ism, but the flesh being made word. But what could this possibly mean? It points, ontogenetically and phylogenetically, to global pilgrim and eschatological enlightenment. It points to a future dominance of the fourth stage of meaning.<sup>23</sup> It points to the possibility, even a slim probability, in our miserable times, of your adult growth.

What more to say, to write? Ven Wisdom needs the Zen strategy, and a spread of analogues. Eventually it is to be a human culture, braced by a **HOW** language<sup>24</sup> that is positional, poositional,<sup>25</sup> a redressed poise,<sup>26</sup> damping the dialectic ontogenetics of confrontationalism.<sup>27</sup> It is not a hurried flowering, ontogenetically or phylogenetically: one had best think of three score years and ten rising to the rising marvels of radiant onto-acceleration, or some billions of years to rising phylo-maturity. Sophia will have changed deeply her tune and will not look Bach. The terrible pun pirouettes, for me, on my endless listening to a recent recording that has Anne-Sophie Mutter first play Bach concertos and then play Sophia Gubaidulina's *In Tempus*

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Todd, Columbia University Press, 2004. The concluding chapter, "Is there a Feminine Genius?" places her reflections on all three women in a fuller context. What is needed, in all this, is a massive effort of functional collaboration.

<sup>23</sup>See *Field Nocturnes Cantower 46*, "The Fourth Stage of Meaning".

<sup>24</sup>Chapter 2 of my *A Brief History of Tongue* (Axial Publishing, 2002) is titled "How-Language: Works?". It was, however, only through the drive of the field Nocturnes that the normative dynamics of expression emerged - Colette nudging along. So, there emerged the capital **HOW: Home Of Wonder**.

<sup>25</sup>I am recalling my effort in *Cantower IX*, "Position, Poosition, Protopossession". The previous notes indicate my drive towards a fuller heuristic of protopossession.

<sup>26</sup>I echo the title of the Website book, *The Redress of Poise*, which in turns echo's the book of Seamas Heaney, *The Redress of Poetry*, Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, New York, 1995.

<sup>27</sup>See *Surf 9*, "A Secure Understanding of **Real Phenomena**"

*Praesens*.<sup>28</sup> Yes, one can hear Bach in *In Tempus Praesens*, but, tadpole-wise, it “obeys the impassioned desire to develop”<sup>29</sup> that echos beyond its final high F Sharp. Can we hear Aquinas in Lonergan? Yes, but the impassioned desire to develop human development echoes phylogenetically forward, a seeming frog failure, in his final FS.

Have I lost truth in fancy? Charles Hefling Jn. once compared *Insight* to a cello tutor: its proper reading is a strange embrace, a seeking to embrace the universe in a single bow-view.<sup>30</sup> It is the reach of “our whole host and its great pilgrimage,”<sup>31</sup> that can be symbolized in YoYo Ma’s embrace of the cello, his fusion with the cello. But what, then, if the cello is God’s embrace? One can thus, then, THEN, edge towards the larger heuristic fusion of the fusion of an everlasting embrace that is to be ever infinitely remote from completion.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Deutsche Grammophon 2008 The conductor, with the London Symphony Orchestra, is Valery Gergiev.

<sup>29</sup>I quote the notes to the recording, “Safeguarded by Sophia” by Selke Harten-Strehk.

<sup>30</sup>The implicit reference here is to the reach of theoretic consciousness in *Insight* 417[442] envisaged here as meshed, in a later culture, with aesthetic consciousness.

<sup>31</sup>“... each member, each group, indeed our whole host and its great pilgrimage, was only a wave in the eternal stream of human beings, of the eternal strivings of the human spirit towards the East, towards Home ...”, Hermann Hess, *The Journey to the East*, London, 1970, 12.

<sup>32</sup>*Field Nocturnes Cantower 116* deals skimpily with this topic. Eschatology is a massively underdeveloped area of theology. Eventually theorems analogous to the incompleteness theorems of logic will emerge, contextualizing a rich perspective on the spiraling within the trinitarian circumincession. See the concluding sentence of *Surf Zero*.