

## Field Nocturne 3

## Gently Putting Lonergan's Two Challenges Together

I am thinking here of both personal gentleness and global gentleness. Let me begin with the direction of global gentleness. I have claimed that Lonergan is the foster-father of functional collaboration and that history is its mother. Or perhaps I should say that history is to be its mother? But let us not get too twisted here. What I am talking about is the patience of God and the gentleness of emergent probability. The third stage of meaning is to emerge in its own God time.

But we have our place in that emergence, our place perhaps in turning, during this century, the cycle of decline into a cycle of inclination. An inclination, say, to slip-slide the shadow of the childout principle into college and kindergarten. That principle, as I originally formulated it, presents the norm, "when teaching children geometry one is teaching children children."<sup>1</sup> Instead of children, of course, one can have first-year university students; instead of geometry one can have economics or English; and always one has oneself as teacher teaching oneself. I can envisage little local emergences of this norm, this *ethos*,<sup>2</sup> in the next decade. Will it slowly capture and captivate the hearts of teachers in Canada or China or Congo in this century? What we have to do, with cunning and enthusiasm, is to operate on the counter-NIMBY principle: Yes, In My Back Yard! And we have to, gently, back that local effort - "think globally but act locally" - by fostering the beginnings of global care in education.

For education, of course, one may read anything from mountaineering to music. We are back with the notion of fostering fathers and mothers, HCE and ALP.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Principle is best read about within the context of the treatment of it *Cantower XLI*.

<sup>2</sup>See the final quotation from Lonergan in note 15 below.

<sup>3</sup>The reference here is to the male and female in Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*: Here Comes Everyone and Anna Livia Pulcrabelle.

I have been writing here foundationally, but with a pedagogically bent dictated by circumstances. But that bent could be backed with the venture and adventure of page 250 that concerned us in *Field Nocturne 1*. This morning, as I began this essay, I thought again of one of my favorite quotations from Fred Crowe, written forty five years ago in an early effort to make Lonergan's work more public. Best include it here before elaborating on its meaning for me now. Crowe is pointing to the years of personal labour required without which his followers "have little chance of understanding what Lonergan is doing and talking about. This is rather bluntly said, but is there not room for a measure of bluntness at this stage? If we wish to either praise or blame we must first understand. Lonergan's position is that the way to understand him is to carry out for ourselves the performance of appropriating conscious activity. He has said as much in *Insight*, he has repeated it for years in his lectures, and his claim is ignored, sometimes as much by disciples as by opponents."<sup>4</sup>

As I mused on this in today's predawn darkness it dawned on me that, yes, there is, there was, need for a measure of bluntness in 1964, in the 60<sup>th</sup> year of Lonergan's life, and Lonergan felt that need deeply and daily, as he fermented into the Roman winter and bubbled out into the formulated measure, the *nomos*, in February of 1965. It would be some difficult years later before he brought that bluntness into focus on page 250 of *Method in Theology*, where you and I find ourselves: or might find ourselves a little more.<sup>5</sup>

So, here I find myself with a little more precision and bluntness, summing up my

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<sup>4</sup>Frederick E.Crowe, "The Exigent Mind: Bernard Lonergan's Intellectualism", *Spirit as Inquiry. Studies in Honor of Bernard Lonergan S.J.*, edited by F.E.Crowe S.J., Herder and Herder, New York, 1964, 27. I would note that the **saying** in *Insight* was in terms of a first view of generalized empirical method, but the doing there was in terms of his later saying (*A Third Collection*, 141. See *Joistings 21* and *22* on the third and fourth meanings of generalized empirical method ). Many contemporary disciples are discomforted by the challenge of understanding objects.

<sup>5</sup>We need to think this out in the context of the third dynamic line of the display in *Method in Theology*, 48. Normatively, personal relations are not static.

random assembly, completion, comparison, reduction, classification, selection of this first half-century's responses to Lonergan's writing by claiming that his writings have not been read.<sup>6</sup> The bluntness comes closer, too close, to home when I say that the problem of Lonergan studies in the past fifty years is that neither *Insight* nor *Method in Theology* have been read. But that brief dialectic statement needs the back-up of some serious venture into the tasks of the previous operations if it is to stand. That venture is not within my present intention: for one thing, it would be too blunt for many in these first generations of Lonergan scholarship. What I wish to do is to turn forwards, move forward in my foundational mode, though with a compactness that meets present needs.

So I return to Crowe's pointing, and so to the challenge for each of us. What I began with above points to a type of democratic direction: let each of us move forward in our own small way. But let us come out of our aloneness in cunningly effective ways. The Lonergan scholarship of these first generations has been very much a lone-ranger business, ineffective, even effete, and regularly caught in the temptation to do comparative work. What we need is a "within" effort at collaboration. The lone-ranger Lonergan ended his solitary journey of *Insight* with an appeal for collaboration.<sup>7</sup> I am simply drawing attention to that appeal, but to a fresh reading of it in one's own lonely bones and nerves. Those levels in each and all of us call us to luminous cosmic alignment "with that order's dynamic joy and zeal".<sup>8</sup> There is the cosmic hope of 13.7

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<sup>6</sup>I am in particular harking back to his suggestive writing, January 1928, about the *vis cogitativa*, available now in Volume 20 of the *Complete Works*. There was no serious audience then for his odd views.

<sup>7</sup>Section 5 of chapter 20, of *Insight*, with its mention of collaboration 29 times, is worth reading within the perspective of his lonely reach during 1953-1964, for a specification of that collaboration that would meet both theological decadence and global needs.

<sup>8</sup>*Insight*, 700[722].

billion years that blossomed up into the ineffability<sup>9</sup> of spirit's light seven million years ago in Africa. Existentially within that ineffability was and is the Spirit's antecedent willingness and hope.<sup>10</sup> "The antecedent willingness of hope has to advance from a generic reinforcement of the pure desire to an adapted and specialized auxiliary ever ready to offset every interference either with intellect's unrestricted finality or with its essential detachment and disinterestedness. The antecedent willingness of charity has to mount from an affective to an effective determination to discover and implement in all things the intelligibility of universal order that is God's concept and choice."<sup>11</sup>

The specialized auxiliary places Paul's hymn to charity of chapter 13 of *First Corinthians* within history's revised chapters 12 and 14 of interpretations and gifts. That revision offers a global unity and beauty to our divine journey, a science of prayer and love radiant in a final cause. "The fact is that wherever there is a final cause, there also is an efficient cause, and it is quite legitimate to seek in the efficient cause of the science, that is in the scientist, the reason why a science forms a unified whole. It is at that point that the significance of group theory comes into view."<sup>12</sup>

I am twisting Lonergan's meaning here, of course, but in a way that freshens the reading of his lonely writing and speaking. At 60, when he stumbled upon the so-now-obvious group of operations he was sick and tired, and after his lung operation, not in a

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<sup>9</sup>See *The Incarnate Word*, University of Toronto Press, 2009, thesis 12. The book is still in process. The point is extremely important in our understanding of this finitude of ours: the remark made by Lonergan in this book, that the pure desire is ineffable, says something very precise about nature, grace, and exigence. See *Phenomenology and Logic*, the index, under *Exigence*.

<sup>10</sup>A context here is the metagram labelled **W3** See *Prehumous 2*.

<sup>11</sup>*Insight*, 726[747-8].

<sup>12</sup>*Topics in Education*, 160, line 16.

condition or a mood for heavy fantasy.<sup>13</sup> *Method* was a limp, descriptive, and on the whole non-functional, presentation of his pointers to the Global village's answer to the town problem of both Paul and Plato. Might we pick up freshly on those pointers, reaching out to their explanatory meaning with a reaching that is immediate and pragmatic? But I do not wish to further consider that pragmatism here.<sup>14</sup> That is a task for conversations, collaborations, clashings.<sup>15</sup> The group interested in promoting Lonergan's pointings must each find steps of personal salvation, but the full group must

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<sup>13</sup>I recall, during those meetings that went towards the book *Searching for Cultural Foundations*, Fred Lawrence remarking how Lonergan just did not have the opportunity for fantasy. But we have, and it is something we must share in a global reach, even in elementary imaginative description. Can you imagine functional collaboration slowly blossoming into the dynamic operation of a group of international elders that would mediate effective transformation of the UN and the World Bank and seeding the post-axial second time of humanity by the lift of education we mused about earlier? And, more immediately and practically, might you share my fantasy of these last few years regarding future research and future functional history ?

<sup>14</sup>I pack these last few footnote because I do not wish to push forward and besides I await collaborative suggestions. But it is no harm to draw attention to the minimalism of collaboration I suggested in chapter 3 of *Pastkeynes Pastmodern Economics: A Fresh Pragmatism* and in *Method in Theology: Revisions and Implementations*, chapter 1. The collaborative effort need not presuppose any of the re-orientations envisaged in *Insight* and *Method*, beyond an elementary acceptance of the need for functional collaboration, whatever the disciplinary interest. The strategic historic effect is to be a gradual global recycling of the challenge of *Insight*.

<sup>15</sup>I think that all these are necessary. But we must make a fresh beginning. Certainly I am here - [pmcshane@shjaw.ca](mailto:pmcshane@shjaw.ca) - open to responses towards either collaboration or clashing. And certainly, we need such clashing as is found, say, in mathematics and physics, botany, psychology, sociology and economics. So, little steps of collaboration and self-identification would occur. And above all **fantasy**. I shall try to make my own contribution to that fantasy concrete, in a fresh detailed reading of parts of *Insight* and *Method*. Perhaps I could identify that effort with that tantalizing paragraph in *Method* where Lonergan more or less ask for a re-writing of the first part of *Method*: "From such a broadened basis one can go on ...". but one could go on better if he or she were one of many, a group existentially united in a follow up of Lonergan's and history's search, united in "an existential apprehension of the group's origin. The aesthetic apprehension of the group's origin and story becomes operative whenever the group debates, judges, evaluates, decides and acts - and especially in a crisis." (Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, 230). And, in my evaluative judgment, we have a crisis of Lonergan studies and of global culture.

step out of the entrapment of description and *haute vulgarization*, "it must lift its eyes more and ever more to the more general and difficult fields of speculation, for it is from them that it has to derive the delicate compound of unity and freedom in which alone progress can be born, struggle, and win through."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Loneragan, *For A New Political Economy*, 20.