

Field Nocturne 39

FN 1-38: Faulty Communications or Stumbling Research?

The title above surely comes as a surprise? It came to me as I began to gather my perspective and energy to move forward from Field Nocturne 28, reviewing what were the previous essays, most of which were almost complete. Yet the essays running through the teens circled round the problem of communication. There were many facets of this, but the central two were the problem of bringing you to a grip on aggreformism and the problem of establishing in you the Position. I did not have that problem with you, of course, in so far as you were incarnated, enfleshed, in both. But then you would be an exception, indeed a very hidden exception.

Looking back now over my essays on aggreformism - say, here, *Field Nocturne 23*, "Aggreformism" - I would say that I might have done better had the entire 300 pages been devoted to the pedagogy of that shift from hylemorphism to aggreformism. What do you think? Who is to say whether it, or they, were flawed, if not completely mistaken, as efforts towards progress, towards **personal relations** that were authentic.¹ Who is to say, and how are they to say, whether they were or whether we could thus identify them?

¹I put ***personal relations*** in bold face as a reminder of the position of these words in the display of page 48 of *Method in Theology*. We are back, then, at a refinement of the problem of encounter that we encountered in the previous essay, back to or forward from the final note of the previous essay. But for now I simply add two pointers [1] that personal relating, on that strange third line of the display of page 48, is there as dynamic, a reaching beyond that needs a full operative context of Ontogenesis, the operations and thematic of which is the concern of *FNC 116*, "Ontogenetics", [2] that encounter in hits concrete reality and concrete consideration requires a context that seems quite beyond normal science. This latter point is the simple point made by Lonergan in the Florida Interview of Easter 1970, conveniently quoted in the next footnote.

Note that those seemingly simple questions put us in the larger context of detecting progress. We could enlarge those questions by enlarging their object: was *Insight* a flawed and even wasted effort of Bernard Lonergan?² It certainly was not effective communication: neither aggreformism nor The Position, Neither came across, went across, with a serious statistic of success.

You can sense where this is leading: it is leading to the problem, not just of adequacies of content to be communicated, but of criteria of such communication as communication. And the twist here is that the effort made in these essays brings forth fresh - or should I type fairly hidden? - aspects of communication and its problems. Fairly hidden? What is surprising, or might we agree amazing, is that they are no more deeply hidden than the frontispiece quotation from Aristotle that Lonergan used for *Insight*. So, we might say that it is only hidden in so far as the frontispiece is not read properly. Round we go, then, again. Who is to say what is proper reading?

The honest human answer is that none of us is in a position to say: or should I say, in **the position, the position, the protopossession** to say? The boldfaced print's usual function is to invite you into your own skin, and if the skinflint is a habitual spark, then we are home: which the previous sentence claims that we are not. The boldfaced type also refers to Cantower 9, "Position, Poosition, Protopossession", where I had a half-decent meaning for position and poosition, but not of the third object What was or is protopossession? I have been searching since. Certainly it is to be "Desire

²I am not talking about the apparent flaw that Lonergan talks about in the Interview mentioned in the previous note, expressed in the quotation below. I am talking about the limitations of language and culture, of doctrinal communications. "There is in *Insight* a footnote to the effect that we're not attempting to solve anything about such a thing as personal relations. I was dealing in *Insight* fundamentally with the intellectual side - a study of human understanding - ion which I did my study of human understanding and got human intelligence in there, not just a sausage machine turning out abstract concepts." (Lonergan, *A Second Collection*, "An Interview with Fr. Bernard Lonergan edited by Philip McShane", 221-222).

Undistanced” in a new global way, Homeboys and home girls.³ “Hoopsa, boyoboy, hoopsa! Universally that person’s acumen is esteemed very perceptive concerning whatsoever matters are being held as most profitably by mortals with sapience endowed to be studied who is ignorant of that which the most in doctrine erudite and certainly by reason of that in them high ming’s ornament deserving of veneration constantly maintain when they affirm that other circumstances being equal by no exterior splendour is the prosperity of a nation more efficaciously asserted than by the measure of how far forward may have progressed the tribute of its solicitude for the proliferent continuance”

I thought of this follow-on from Joyce’s expressed conviction, from which my title for the total Cantower series came, as a suitable preparation for the wind-down wind-out of this reflection on the paragraph named **study**, as the measure of how far forward may have progressed out tribute to the study of plants, of Blooms. We were studying the study - and self-study now normatively involved - by *A Universe of Consciousness*⁴ of a universe of irritability and consciousness, and found an all-round failure of present study or study of study. The bundle of books such as the one referred to in that last note at least point to the puzzle, whether the pointing is popular or not.

And the subtitle of that book suitably points to the total challenge, the what all to go round; to go round right; to circuminness. How does matter become imagination? We have our old trick: remove the question mark. HOW does matter become imagination. The proper wording makes matter imagination. Minding makes matter

³Note 12 of the previous essay is the context of this reference to the same “Oxen of the Sun” episode. The quotation to follow is from the beginning of that episode. “Homeboys and home girls” echos my title for the Cantower Series, “Roun Doll, Home James”. Roun, of course has a multitude of resonances, relating to “run” (pronounced roon in Gaelic, with meanings such as **secret** and **beloved**: then there are North European meanings). And there is, of course, the connection to the first word of *Finnegans Wake*, *riverrun* reverieroon....

⁴The title is that of a contemporary book, with full title *A Universe of Consciousness. How Matter Becomes Imagination*, by Gerald M. Edelman and Giulio Tononi, Basic Books, New York, 2000. I refer to the book later here as **Consciousness**.

imagination, like Henry Moore minding stone. A proper wording within Moore. But what proper wording within matter is adequate to mind matter how-lingually? That is where all this and all of us drive round to end up. What are we up to?

The “being up to”, especially in our personal relating, is not something to trail off with in the end of a series on neurodynamics and sensibility. And yet, there it is at the start, as a start, in our hearing and seeing, of hearing birdsong, of seeing flowers, of hearing and seeing one another. That “being up” is the mysterious paradoxical exigence⁵ lurking in what Renaud Barbaras called “originary space”.⁶ Is originary space to be everlasting, so that we might say that imagination becomes God, and matter and God become imagination? Is there a theology and an eternity of perception? Are we stumbling towards a whole new context of both communication and research?

⁵See the index of *Phenomenology and Logic*, under *Exigence*.

⁶See the conclusion of the quotation repeated a few times in the texts of the previous essays.