

Joistings 3

What-to-do Questions

I have left my jottings on this topic just as they emerged from conversation. So *Joistings 3* does not flow like the others: but it draws attention to a troubled area of study.

3.1

This *Joistings* is primarily addressed to a conversant of yesterday, an owner of a risk management business who knows the story and the strange providence of this problem's emergence and convenience for both of us. The broader picture is illustrated by my reading, yesterday morning, an article by a Lonergan "expert" who would have got poor marks for the essay in my first year university course. I would have written on the margin: "please read chapter 6 of my *Wealth of Self* and have another go at this". (The advice, agendum, goes to you of course: and the book is on the Website).

These Joistings are clearly only mappings: I have to presume seriousness. Seriousness needs the nudge of a serious problem: no way I can reproduce that seriousness as we reached it in yesterday's hours of conversation.

PROBLEM? As it occurred in that essay I read yesterday:
What happens between discovering a fact and shifting on to and through doing something about it?

A VERY confused area in Lonergan Studies.... even leaving aside the muddles about feelings and values. In fact, for starters, leave that out.

THE PROBLEM? Section 2.3 of *Lack in the Beingstalk*, with title "The Decision Problem" poses it, and I give another starting point reference there on note 42: Gilby's translation of qq. 6-17 of the *Prima Secundae* of Aquinas. There is a more recent translation: the advantage of Gilby is that he has an appendix where you might find an easier start.

Easier?

But not easy.

If this work were easy, why would its fruit [note that *fruitio*, a blossom-presence, is the last act in the series in Thomas' analysis!] be missing in present Lonergan culture?

3.2

A function of these jottings is to **clearly omit**. Naming the Agenda. Does it bring to mind for you "doctrines"? A major cultural problem is the mistaking of doctrinal reading, as it leads by repetition, for control of meaning. Like mistaking mountain-map-familiarity with climbing.

O. K. So, yes, agenda: but in stages of climbing. I mentioned *Wealth* chapter 6: that was my first year text-book. But the text was only a take off point for very elementary, naive, self-attention.

[note here, perhaps, a general problem in present university education: poor first year courses close-off students by giving, so-to-speak, "basic concepts". [Ho ho. Basic concepts are reached, if you are lucky, after ten years climbing]

A first effort, then, has to resemble the slow struggle with self-attention of chapter 6 of *Wealth*, which took a month of class and "home' work.

A key type of illustration: the ethics of giving your friends a good dinner going back over the facts re your friends, going forwards to fantasy about good times for all.

A useful direction: think out the ethics of the person who invited you: Cosmo Polis or Cosma Polis. Were they attentive, intelligent, reasonable, **foresightful** [**adventurous**], responsible.

Notice the missing transcendental. [A separate transcendental? Check Appendix A of *Phenomenology and Logic*. But then go on to puzzle, with your alert molecules; are any of them separate? is it not a matter of just distinction?]

3.3

I would insist that if you do the above “first year’ exercises properly you will have got the bones of Thomas’ twelve point series. My current favorite recommended exercise is “The Menu Exercise”.

What do you do, sitting in a restaurant, between receiving the menu from the waiter and handing it back with your definite order?

But don’t do this in some vague way; this is a concrete scientific experiment, where you don’t know beforehand what is relevant. Etc etc. Dine out: or at least get a real menu. It amazes me how people can talk about self-attention in a general way: think, rather, of the parallel in attention in chemistry, botany, good therapy.

I omit all the detailed directions: a later culture will produce those in lengthy first-year texts. But think, for example, of the stages of *being pleased* as you muse over the menu. You cut back the list to what *might please you*. Don’t you? And have you attended to that with such a slow pace that you can arrive at being please about your appreciation of being pleased? Self- attention in its rich fullness is a very foreign world: a sort of a lift of Proust or Joyce into the distant third stage of meaning.

Distant? Yes. Just because Aristotle or Augustine got in there a bit doesn’t mean that there was “A Greek Discovery of Mind”! And we are trying here to push beyond Augustine and Aquinas.

3.4

The mention of Augustine brings in the problem of moving to the next level and complexifying it. Check Lonergan’s Introduction to the *Verbum* articles: Augustine uncovering his inner words. That’s the next stage, the crisis stage in 3.5, but here taken broadly.

I suspect that if you are honest you may be shocked to find that you were not really reading luminously about you inner words when you read *Insight* for the first time - or maybe even for the tenth time!!.

So, I'm afraid that you are being invited to get back to the *Verbum* articles. For instance, there is that stuff about the definition of man including bones. Does the definition of woman, or your self-definition, include feelings?

So, you find yourself back in the first-year exercise: what pleased you about the reduced list of dishes: did the arrival at pleasedness not involve remembering and thinking about those previous tastes? Chicken Birani or Chicken Kiev?!

This is a really tough zone. It will test your grip on "the position", on your grip on critical realism, or what I call extreme realism.

And there is my position on this positioning: I would claim that less than 10% of present Lonergan enthusiasts actually "assume the position". Does that make you pause?

3.5

So, months later - if you are serious about this self-discovery:[please be honest with yourself you don't have the time? No problem: but then don't go on to talk about this zone as if you understood yourself!!], you are ready to have a shot at the third-year topic. Lucky for me, I have dealt with it in some suggestive detail, elsewhere: in Quodlibet 19, "The Solution to the Problem of Feelings in Lonergan Studies".

"Dealt with"? You find that I pack my hints into about ten footnotes. And the problem gets larger as you struggle. So, you may find yourself into the zone of *Insight* 464[489] - with some help there in Quodlibets 13-18.

3.6

There are much deeper levels of reflection here, even without venturing, adventuring, into the ethical need for functional specialization in culture. **That is the** fundamental ethical question in present culture. *Cantower* 18, section 3, could help with that issue, and the broader leads in chapter 3 of *Pastkeynes Pastmodern Economics: a Fresh Pragmatism*.