

Joistings 19

Ormerod's Dated Ecclesiology

The word *Dated* got your attention I suspect, and if you are Ormerod it may even have got you annoyed!¹ I could have begun with a title like "McShane's Dated Foundations". Does that cheer you up Neil, or Oar (Other Annoyed Reader)? But in fact that only takes part of the sting out of my title and my essay.

My own writings on foundations are certainly dated. The datedness or date, I suppose would be the date of emergence of "Functional Specializations in Theology," substantially chapter 5 of *Method in Theology*, 1969. Though, since I was in on the topic in 1966, that would be my datedness. Why are my writings on foundations dated? Because I have been writing on foundations since 1961 in the usual style of presentation and controversy, quoting selectively, criticizing or appropriating, etc etc. I should have known better after 1966.

When I use that phrase, "should have known better" I am appealing to the parallel with successful science that Lonergan mentions, that I have enlarged on in recent writings.² The phrase belongs to what might be considered harsh standards in

¹This short essay was written early in 2006, between the completion of *Molecules, Minding, Meaning* (to appear from University of Toronto Press, 2008) and tackling the work mentioned in note 2, which will be available on the Website in September 2007. The comment seemed worth making both since Ormerod represents a solid effort to reach out to the social sciences, better than many present searchings in ecclesiology, but still falling short of the fullness of empiricity and collaboration offered by Lonergan and described briefly in the first work mentioned above. It could have been a piece of a larger reflection, picking up on other viewpoints, and reaching towards a larger heuristic of the dynamics of the mystical body, even pushing on to its eschatological flowering. See note 17 below. Now, over a year later, it seems seems worthwhile to air the topic in this narrowing focused form. It may be seen as paralleling one of those short critical essays in physics to which I refer in my next note. Then some later author may sublimate the efforts of myself and Ormerod in some such work as *The Dawning of Generalized Empirical Method*.

²Most evidently in paralleling Lonergan's Standard Model of functional specialization and its foundational content with the Standard Model in contemporary physics: *Lonergan's Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry*.

the world of, say, scientific thinking and publishing in physics. A shift in the theoretic front, by, say, Salem or Glashov, sets a new standard, unless the shift is hidden or confused like that of Herman Weyl. Or just erroneous. If it is erroneous, then it is rejected on theoretic grounds. If it is confused, then work is needed to correct and rescue the shift: again, one thinks of Herman's Weyl's work, and the harsh criticisms, and the rescuing that led to contemporary gauge theory.³

I should have known better: then what is my excuse? Well, first off, I was not sufficiently clear for some decades on the task of foundations. Still, after forty years on the problem, and more light on the task, I now have no excuse. So what is my excuse? I have indeed two excuses! First, the task as I see it now is extremely difficult. It involves a novel differentiation of consciousness which brings with it a refined differentiation of expression. Were I to try spelling out that last sentence for you in an accurate fashion, I would be into foundational pedagogy. Should I try, give it a whirl?

The foundation task is to operate within an accepted context of functional differentiation,⁴ carrying forward⁵ from the best available present foundations

³There seems little value in going into detail here on the sharp exchanges that occur in physics at its front edge. I would mention only a single very useful work: Lochlainn O'Raiheartaigh, *The Dawning of Gauge Theory*, Princeton University Press, 1997. See note 15 below.

⁴The differentiation reaches into linguistic expression, sentence by sentence, beyond the general demand of a luminosity of subjectivity's linguistic feed-back. A relevant foundational description of the latter feedback is given in *Method in Theology*, 88, note 34.

⁵Foundational searching does not deviate from the baton-exchange pattern of the cycle. If intussusception of cultural elements occurs, it is legitimate and *per accidens* to the cycling, but it resists dialogue, which is the function of the eighth specialty.

thematized⁶ through the program of page 250 of *Method in Theology*.⁷ That best of foundations is creatively learned in open cyclic fashion. On its ingested basis the foundational community pushes towards additions to that recent foundational achievement, primarily through creative fantasy, in order to add to the invariants - at least tentative invariants - that are operative already in the Tower of Able, and relatively effective in the global community. It should be noted that foundational fantasy reaches also, but in complex ways,⁸ to failures in efficiency,⁹ refining previous suggested invariants. Foundations' function, is of course, two-fold: added to the task of fantasy is the task of promoting an uplift in the mediating cycling of $C_{I,j}$ (I, j going from 1 to 8) and its external effectiveness through $C_{8,9}$ and $C_{9,1}$.¹⁰

How did you find that last paragraph? Tough reading? It is a shot at foundational writing. Do the footnotes belong to that writing? That is a question worth your entertaining. But at all events, the paragraph gives me my second excuse: such writing is just not communicative at present. It has its analogue, for Lonergan, in tensor calculus' presentations of space-time relations to the experiment physicists of the 1920's,

⁶The thematic should be controlled by canons of metaphysical equivalence, including the increasing refined ones demanded by functional differentiation. On this see chapters 9 and 10 of McShane, *Molecules, Minding, Meaning*.

⁷It seems worthwhile to refer you again to my 200+ page commentary on the page in 8 SOFDAWARES and a dozen or so *Quodlibets*.

⁸The patterns of *per se* and *per accidens* conversations, C_{5x} , are too complex to discuss in this short note.

⁹The foundational principle here is the manner in which efficiency relates axiomatically to the unity of the science. For a descriptive indication of that axiom, see Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, 160, line 16. It needs to be cast in an explanatory form that would mesh with related axioms relating to beauty, linguistic isomorphs, etc: characters of an adequate Pragmatics.

¹⁰The manner in which the functional specialty Communications mediates cultural transformation thus renews the cycle through a shift of Research is the topic of a following essay, *Joistings 21*. The useful diagrammatic context here is W3.

“for whom the recondite mathematics was sheer mystery.”¹¹

That excuse, with the excuse of difficulty, leads me to stay at present with my dated expression. Both excuses will fade with the later maturation of an ethos of functional collaboration. But notice my foundational stand, emerging if you like from my entering into my random dialectic with that *Gregorianum* stand of Lonergan in 1969.¹² Like Rahner, in 1971,¹³ I found that his foundational stand reached out to other fields of inquiry; unlike Rahner, I did not find that, coupled with an apparent disregard for mystery, to be an excluding weakness in the suggested strategy of differentiating global inquiry.¹⁴

But now the issue is not my differences with Rahner of 1971 but my differences with Ormerod of 2005. How might one tackle those differences efficiently? Is my answer in some odd way **evident** to you? The answer is that the differences must be tackled in **Boldfaced** fashion. Of course, bold-faced is sweetly ambiguous here. It refers - obviously? - to the **boldfaced** part of the present text, but it also refers to a certainly required bluntness, something I associate both with Fred Crowe and with normal goings-on in modern physics.¹⁵

¹¹*Insight*, 581[604].

¹²A first version of chapter 5 of *Method in Theology* was published there.

¹³Rahner is responding to the version of chapter 5 of *Method* published in the *Gregorianum* in 1969. 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. In the translation of Conn O’Donovan made by him during a recent period of our collaboration, “Lonergan’s theological methodology seems to me to be so generic that it actually suits every science.”

¹⁴See *ChrISt in History*, chapter 4, where I consider this in some detail. The text is on the Website.

¹⁵On bluntness in physics, see the text mentioned in note 3. Quotes from page 108 there regarding bluntness are at note 25 of Joisting 15. Then there is Crowe’s point about illusions of understanding Lonergan without serious labour : “...This is rather bluntly said, I am afraid, but

But before I move to some bold-faced comments we need a context from Ormerod, which I split in two: his statement of the problem of an understanding of the church; his statement of the solution to the problem.

If I am to be efficient here I must be brief regarding the problem: you can read the excellent presentation of it in his article: dated, but excellent. Dated?: we'll get to that!

Sociology is in a mess; ecclesiology is in a related mess; the various solutions to the mess are in a mess. None of this is news, and all of this fits nicely into Lonergan's description of the general mess he wrote of fifty years ago.¹⁶

What is Ormerod's answer to this mess? Here I must be less brief, for we are at the heart of my objection to the general datedness of present theological studies, including Lonergan studies. I quote most of Ormerod's conclusion:

"What conclusions may one draw from this analysis of the relationship between theology and the social sciences? Perhaps the first is that while the social sciences enjoy an autonomy from theology, it is only a relative autonomy. Theology has the right and responsibility to draw two matters to the attention of social scientists."¹⁷ The paragraph goes on to point to the problem of evil and then - note the repetition: have we got the

is there not room for a measure of bluntness at this stage?"(*Spirit and Inquiry*, Herder and Herder, 1964, "The Exigent Mind: Bernard Lonergan's Intellectualism", 16-33; p.27.

¹⁶I think particularly of the concluding section of chapter 7 of *Insight*.

¹⁷Neil Ormerod, "A Dialectic Engagement with the Social Sciences in an Ecclesiological Context", *Theological Studies* (66) 2005, 839. See note 1 above. The entire volume 66(2005) would give an ample start to the reflection suggested in note 1 above. I mention an essay from each of that year's component sub-volumes as rich nudgings towards the larger context. There is Michael McCarthy's reflections on an ecclesiology of groaning in March, Ilia Delio's question in June "Is Creation Eternal?", Cardinal Martini's view of Lonergan and the Church in September, and in the same December volume as Ormerod there is Joseph Bracken's "Bodily Resurrection and the Dialectic of Spirit and Matter". Still, such a reflection would be dated: we should be turning to an anticipation of the refined sublation of such searchings in the future Standard Model mentioned in note 2 above.

point?! “theology has the right and responsibility to remind the social sciences that they can never give a complete account of human data”. Pretty obvious stuff, you might say, even if you suspect that it is wrong. But let us first move to the next paragraph, which I quote in full.

“The second observation concerns the way in which theology can incorporate the work of the social sciences. Here the conclusion is equally radical. Theological work that deals with social realities, such as ecclesiology, cannot seek to develop a ‘theological account’ and then hope to tack on some social sciences as an afterthought. The perspective of a reoriented social science must be integrated within the theology from the beginning. What is required is a theological gestalt, a framework that is at once theological and social scientific. It requires nothing less than the development of a theology of history itself. To my mind, the only successful position that achieves this, at least as a starting point, is the work of Robert Doran in *Theology and the Dialectic of History*. Building on Lonergan’s notion of the scales of values, of healing and creating in history (a modern transposition of the grace-nature scheme), and of the analogy of dialectic. Doran has developed a theological construct that can incorporate a reoriented social science into its very heart. It goes beyond the scope of my article to establish this claim, but at least it gives some indication of the magnitude of the task to be undertaken.”¹⁸

Before I comment - better perhaps, ask you to reflect - on this paragraph I must bring you into the context of my own recent struggles.¹⁹ One key fruit of these struggles is the book *Molecules, Minding, Meaning*, in which I take a position on the interplay of theology and any science. Summary would be silly here and, at all events, my view is well known, that Lonergan’s functional specialist solution to his problem of fifty years

¹⁸Ormerod, op. cit., 840.

¹⁹By the end you should appreciate that lengthy comments on Ormerod’s last paragraph are profitably left to *Joistings* 23.

ago is still the best on offer: it offers the limited efficiency that he requires, under grace, of the cosmopolis that he reached for at the end of that expression of the mess of the past and present century. It does not magisterially talk of a duty and responsibility of theology: it talks of generalized empirical method in Lonergan's final version of it "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 the corresponding objects."²⁰ That final version, if you work at grasping the central normativity, points to social studies doing their own thing. That 'own thing' will blossom out into functional specialist social studies, just as physics and botany will: slowly, sloppily and sloppily, necessarily, embarrassedly.²¹ *Molecules, Minding, Meaning* makes this point at some length in Part One of the three-part book. The book aims at answering not just the question, What is a theological system, but the full question of cosmopolis, What structure would ground efficiently global progress? The answer, summarily sketched in chapter 6, points to two meanings of system: the system that is the cycling of functional specialization meshing all human inquiry into an integral ongoing operation: the system that is known in most disciplines as systematics, but now envisaged as a genetics of successful systems.

All that is too brief, but the main point that I am coming to is that the effort of the book required taking seriously, in Part 3 of *Molecules, Minding, Meaning*. Doran's attempt to answer the question, *What is Systematic Theology?*, a work that became available to me at the end of Part 2. His view gave hope of progress in moving forward Lonergan studies: what is ordinarily called systematics is viewed creatively by Doran as an ongoing genetic adventure. What of system in the larger sense, functional specialist

²⁰"Religious Knowledge", *A Third Collection*, 141.

²¹I am recalling Lonergan's comment on *Method in Theology* 299, regarding embarrassing doctrines not being mentioned in polite company.

collaboration? It is acknowledged, but seems to be side-lined. The question that I was led to raise was, Is that side-lining simply short-term and strategic? That question is the heart of *Joistings 18*. Next in my on-going efforts, larger considerations were necessary: especially relating to the task of advancing the meaning of research and communications as specialties, and of lifting, in that context, the meaning of generalized empirical method to a third level to be associated with the third stage of meaning and method. At this point in my work the December 2005 issue of *Theological Studies* came into my hands, and so I found myself faced again with the problem of Doran's stand. I had not read *Theology and the Dialectic of History*. Ormerod's final paragraph led, leads, me, to do so. But a first perusal informs me that functional specialization is not taken seriously in it. My hope, harking back to Part 3 of *Molecules, Minding, Meaning* and to *Joistings 18*, is that the book represents an earlier view of Doran, that his recent work is a shift towards acknowledging the centrality of *Method in Theology's* central pointing. Is this true? It is a question that I must pose to Doran.

But must I? Yes, to dialectic one adds dialogue, but will the dialogue work? So I come back to my initial topic of datedness, and my own foundational stance. I continue, then, from where the previous boldfaced effort ending.

The key foundational stance at issue in present Lonergan studies is the need to "make conversion a topic"²² where the conversion is precisely a conversion to functional specialization. I do not ask for a plunge into the use of functional specialization, but it seems that we should know, share, as a community, where we stand on Lonergan's solution to the problem of decay, his identification of the methodological component in cosmopolis.

My own position has always been quite clear, even if I failed to follow up. *Lack in the Beingstalk* makes the point vigorously by using as analogue Husserl's 1882 work on

²²*Method in Theology*, 253.

the history of the Calculus of Variation.²³ The fuller global calculus of variation is the issue raised by Ormerod and Doran, the problem that I claim was solved by Lonergan. Ormerod's conclusion, quoted above, shows him slipping past that solution. I would prefer to find him taking a stand, a luminous stand. What is wrong with Lonergan's division of labour as a solution to the problems raised by Ormerod, raised on a much grander scale by Lonergan's life-work?

In *Lack in the Beingstalk*, written in 2001, I made the point occasionally that I felt the need to move into some level of confrontation with what might be called the shrinking of Lonergan studies. I was distracted from that by the enterprise of the *Cantowers*.²⁴ That enterprise was abandoned because of the evident need that emerged for a shift into patterns of collaboration. There is a more evident need now, it seems to me, to raise that **boldfaced** foundational issue.²⁵

Go back now to that final paragraph of Ormerod's essay. Brood over it existentially, self-searching for your own stand. Is he replacing Lonergan's framework by Doran's?

You might think of me as asking in those 26 bold words the same question about Ormerod as I ask about Doran. Is Ormerod's strategy a temporary strategy? Or has he just missed the pointing and the significance of Lonergan's identification of a set of differentiations of consciousness that efficiently faces the mess of culture, of sociology, of ecclesiology, of methodology?

Or you might think of me as, in that last boldfaced paragraph, pushing for the

²³See chapter 4 of *Lack in the Beingstalk*, Axial Publishing, 2007.

²⁴The *Cantowers* were to have run from 1-117, ending in December of 2011. I halted at *Cantower 41*, on Doctrinal (or Policy) Functional Specialization.

²⁵I note the addition that I regularly make to the list of general foundational issues given by Lonergan on *Method in Theology* 296-7: I add a number (10) which brings functional specialization into the explicit positioning. I have no reason to think that Lonergan would disagree.

full context of efficiency. Then the going back to Ormerod's last paragraph is undertaken by a "you" that is a sub-community willing to work, stumblingly but hopefully, within the division of labour. The going back is then the going back of the functional specialty dialectic, and the grim operation includes the communal honesty of page 250 of *Method in Theology*. Lonergan's framework gets in there in the *assembly*, and Ormerod's and Doran's, and the views of sociologists and ecclesiologists. But only slowly, and with dedicated and sweaty fantasy.

How might I help? I am, of course, available, easily contacted on your keyboard: pmcshane@shaw.ca. But certainly I must return to *Theology and the Dialectic of History* - check out what Ormerod was enthusing about - and I intend to do that in *Lonergan's Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry*. What I do in between, in *Joistings* 20, 21, 22 and 23, is calculated to help in all this, as well as to prepare for the August (14-18, 2006) Conference in Vancouver. Those four essays reach respectively towards [1] a determination of a new definition of generalized empirical method; [2] a perspective on the task of completing Mathew's work on Lonergan's fundamental search; [3] a placing of Doran's searchings of in a fuller context; [4] the addition of the very basic context of Aquinas' search for the image of God in history.