

LONERGAN WORKSHOP

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edited by
Fred Lawrence

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EDITORIAL NOTE

After the 30th anniversary of *Insight* we tried focusing the theme of each summer's Lonergan Workshop on some work by Lonergan. The article "Mission and Spirit" supplied the theme for many of the articles in this volume. Not surprisingly, though, both the authors included in this volume and its editor have used it as an umbrella for a wide array of issues and concerns.

The most obvious case of editorial initiative in this regard is the inclusion of a paper not originally delivered at a summer workshop, by long-time friend of Lonergan studies and cultivator of Lonergan's thought, James Pambrun. His paper on the relationship between science and theology compares Lonergan's approach with that of Paul Ricoeur. Its appearance here is due in part to our need to bring Lonergan's perspectives more into conversation with those of other thinkers prominent on today's scene.

Eduardo Perez-Valera, SJ contributes a paper that grows out of years of labor on the concrete integration of the foundations of spiritual direction in the Ignatian tradition and the foundations of humane science. The realization that the pure and unrestricted desire to know is closely related to the biblical 'purity of heart' is reinforced in this paper's meditation on the theme of "prayer with the whole heart."

The utterly existential motivation of Perez-Valera's article sounds forth again in Nancy Ring's grapple with spirituality in the context of the overall issue of the spirituality of women. Here Lonergan's style of intentionality analysis is used to put further relevant questions about the ecclesial dimension of Christian living, especially as regards feelings and the imagination. Further plumbing the relationship between symbols and feelings are the papers by Tad Dunne and Louis Roy, OP. Dunne engages in a playful speculation which uses Lonergan's functional specialties heuristically to explore the realm of the imaginal vis-a-vis our concrete orientation as Christians in history: with quite suggestive results. Roy turns religiously converted critical realism in the direction of specifically liturgical symbols and practices to make some quite provocative reflections.

Having been profoundly affected by the profound consonance between Lonergan's intellectualist stress on the preconceptual and prepredicative role of imagination and feelings, and psychologist Ira

Progoff's journaling workshops, William Mathews, sj has for many years been developing the nexus between autobiography and self-appropriation in his afternoon sessions at the summer Workshops. Something of a kairos occurred when Bill was captivated by the need for the specific kind of spiritual biography of Lonergan which could be written only by one who had been appropriating biography and autobiography. We are fortunate indeed to be able to publish a part of Mathews's biographical research partly made possible by his year as a Lonergan Fellow at Boston College.

Philip McShane takes the opportunity of the theme to remind the Lonergan community once again of the height and the distance implicit in Lonergan's challenge to theologians to operate 'at the level of their time' — namely, to enter the domain of austere interiority made uniquely possible by the rise of modern mathematics and science.

Demonstrating what is at stake in the specifically scholarly differentiation of consciousness, Ann Johnston undertakes to communicate a glimpse of what spirit and mission meant to the "faithful remnant" of the ancient time and place objectified in Isaiah's scroll.

Another Lonergan Fellow at Boston College, Filipino theologian Walter Ysaac, SJ was helped by Fr. Lonergan himself to understand that the functional specialty he is called to work in is *communications*. He spent his year as a Fellow exploring this functional specialty, with emphasis on interdisciplinary studies, in response to his concrete situation in the Philippines. His paper conveys the import of this concrete involvement.

There are, as always, a number of persons without whose self-giving collaboration this volume could not have been published. Special thanks are due to Charles Hefling, Darin McNabb, Anne O'Donnell, Jason Raia, and John Boyd Turner.

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MISSION AND SPIRIT: QUESTIONS OF PROBABILITY AND PROVIDENCE

Philip McShane

It is not irrelevant that I wrote this short comment in the Radcliffe Science Library in Oxford. I went to Oxford in May, and will return there in July, primarily to try to revisit seriously and creatively, Proust-fashion, two areas of personal quest. In the mid-fifties, as a graduate in theoretical physics, I had struggled with the quantum-dynamical circumincessions of the fundamental particles. In the early sixties, as undergraduate in theology, I struggled with the analogically-remote circumincession of the fundamental Persons. In neither struggle was I overly successful, though my Trinitarian effort reached publication in *Theological Studies* in 1962: a sign, perhaps, of the low standards prevailing in the queen of the sciences.¹

My revisit soon revealed one major fact: whereas in particle physics there had been a massively challenging change of context,² in

¹Not entirely a joke. John Courtney Murray, then editor of *Theological Studies*, read "The Contemporary Thomism of Bernard Lonergan" (published later in *Philosophical Studies*, Ireland, 1962), considered it unsuited to *T.S.*, but suggested a presentation of the achievement of Lonergan's *Verbum* articles (*T.S.* 1946-1949). I was in first-year theology at the time, suffering the cultural shock of moving from a lectureship in mathematical science to the commonsense eclecticism of theology in Dublin. I doubt if Murray was aware of my undergraduate status. But the point is, I was doing something as an undergraduate in theology that couldn't possibly occur in the mathematical physics of the time: it brings out concretely a central point of this brief paper.

²That no change can be communicated unless the reader can work from an analogue in some world of theory, is a point recognized by few theologians and not all physicists (even Einstein). It is worth noting, however, that "popularization" or summary is, so to speak, in the I of the beholder. So, a recent popular account by R.P. Creason and C.L. Mann of modern particle theory (mainly of the work of Sheldon Glashow), "How the Universe Works," *Atlantic Monthly*, August, 1984, pp. 66-93, could be significantly enlightening to someone competent in group

Trinitarian theology people in systematics muddled along in myth and rhetoric³ much as they had been doing in the mid-sixties, or should I say the mid-fourteenth century? Blackwell's bookstore, where, providentially, physics and theology are on the same floor, was helpful here. Relevant stuff in physics on Lie Groups was beautifully incomprehensible, whereas theology was as readable as ever, and I found a 1988 book on the Most Holy Trinity which was both readable and representatively confused.⁴ My two challenges, then, take on quite different characters. In physics I must drive on well beyond my graduate texts; in theology I return to old and neglected undergraduate texts. But more on this in the conclusion.

Let me now turn to the text before us, "Mission and the Spirit." When I discovered in April that this was the text for the Lonergan Workshop, I mused over the aim and possibilities of our meeting. I was eventually led to put the problem in the context of the discussion of expression and interpretation of *Insight*.⁵

Let us consider *Insight* as the relevant expression. Let me suppose, then, that "Mission and the Spirit" is the corresponding simple interpretation. Is the Workshop to be a set of reflective interpretations? Does its goal include the ambitioning of a universal view-

theory and quantum physics. Parallels can be drawn with "Mission and the Spirit."

*[Quotations in the text, mainly from *De Deo Trino II. Pars Systematica*, and in footnotes, are given by page numbers, followed by line numbers in smaller print.]

³Lonergan opposes rhetoric to system in *De Deo Trino II* (1964) 78, 2-6; 91, 24. His view of system there (*DDT*, 7-64) does not express the rich development of his thinking on genetic systematics during the previous decade; *Method in Theology* (1972) even less so. Contemporary rhetoric magnificently, and regularly neurotically, cloaks both "the vast arid wastes of theological controversy" (*MIT*, 343) and the backwardness of subject "busy concealing the fact from themselves" (*Third Collection*, 1985: 133). What is communally needed is a functional specialist investigation leading to a genetic systematics of genera, species, and varieties of progressive speech. The present essay speaks to a more proximate solitary searching of "self-taste" (*Third Collection*: 132).

⁴John O'Donnell's (1988) book, *The Mystery of the Triune God* moves truncatedly from an eclectic selective discussion of antinomies to rhetorical appeals to Barth, Rahner, and so on. This may seem harsh, but I am thinking of the impossibility of a parallel in serious physics: there, one must cope adequately with the best efforts, in any language, in the field. In later theology, casual selectivity and truncation will have increased probabilities of exclusion through the implementation of *Method in Theology*, p. 250

⁵Lonergan, *Insight*, 562, line 14; 563, 15.

point? Can our efforts envisage mythic components of, e.g. and so on, and so on.

Now, of course, "Mission and the Spirit" is not a simple interpretation: A_1 and A_{ms} are not identical. One can put $A_{ms} = A_1 + dA$, where dA is not infinitesimal: it includes twenty years of Lonergan's intellectual growth as well as the explication of faith-elements of the concluding eighty heuristic pages of *Insight*⁶ already present in Lonergan's fifty-year-old viewpoint. Indeed, on a proper view of generalized intellectual growth one may claim dA to be much larger than A .

The problem may be put in homely fashion considering maps, map-reading, and journeying. While in Oxford I used a three-part map: an inner-city map; a full-city map which included the inner section reduced in scale; and an Oxfordshire map in which the town of Oxford was an interesting identifiable blob. The shrinkage of Oxford in the second map, or, further, to an identifiable blob does not, clearly, make the journey to the Bodleian Library any shorter. I will not draw out the parallel, but it may not be too outrageous to suggest that "Mission and the Spirit" is an interesting identifiable blob.

What, then, can we do? My task today, with Pat Byrne, is to shed some guiding light on the meaning of probability and providence. I will do that first by noting the significance of the word "guiding." The central element in the principal insight communicated by both *Insight* and "Mission and the Spirit" is an invitation to prolonged contemporary exercises in generalized empirical method. But "Mission and the Spirit" requires that the exercises be enlarged by a context of faith. That enlarged context and the relevant exercises are my immediate interest here.

The additional context for adequately grasping the meaning of both "Mission" and "Spirit" is conveniently expressed in the 151 central pages (65-215) of *De Deo Trino, II: Pars Systematica* (Lonergan, 1964). One must note here that the meaning of "Mission" and "Spirit" in this new context is no more evident than the meaning of "color"

⁶I am counting here precisely from p. 669 to the conclusion of the Epilogue. There are many intriguing parallels between *Insight* chapter XIX and Thomas's *Pars Prima*. One may, for instance, compare Thomas's questions 3-26 with the elaboration of the hypothesis of chapter XIX, section 9. While Thomas moves, in question 27, to the hypothesis of intelligible emanations, Lonergan moves to verification: he might well have moved in another direction, "in the twenty-seventh place ..."

and “spin” in the context of Quantum Chromodynamics. And one might enlarge that reflection to consider that the achievement of the functional speciality, communications, is not some mythic return to common meaning, but the final fruition of an eight-fold climb to remote theological meaning.

This additional context is the result of cleansing contemplative prayer. Lonergan in “Mission and the Spirit” (1985: 27) recalls *theoria* as naming contemplative prayer in the Greek patristic tradition. Here I posit it as a foundational stance, magnificently evidenced in Lonergan’s expression of the challenge of moving towards a fruitful understanding of the eternal reality of providence, of conceiving the Christian Divinity. I can only give hints to his pointers, misprints.

One is seeking to appreciate, systematically and lovingly, the personality patterns of one’s loving appreciation of an infinite, totally mysterious, befriending: a primary befriending in being inseparable from an absolutely supernatural befriending. But the focus of that search, in the relevant four chapters of *De Deo Trino*, is on the circumincessional inner Divine Friendship — not then on God as creator or on God as lover of all, but on God constituted eternally as Three (DDT: 91, 3-10), and we glimpse that autonomy (90, 9-29), not in searching our practicality or our love of knowledge, but in so far as we struggle to grasp, conceive, and accept our own autonomous self-conceiving, self-projecting, self-electing, here-and-now to be such or so (90, 30 to 91, 2). It is, then, a deeply prudent taking into possession, into procession, of self-procession, “within the position”⁷ in the dark light of faith. Insofar as one initiates this “taking into possession” then one may move from the reality of being an image of God out of the divine intention, to being an image of God out of one’s own intention (202, 26-29). The move is frail: it has the frailty of analogical understanding; it has the frailty of unholiness; it has the frailty of virtuality, heuristicality, beginnings (70, 4; 87, 6; 89, 11; 155, 23-26; 245, 31-32). So, we make a beginning of intelligibly (94, 18-20) speaking our inner word of the circumincessional Divine Word and holily

⁷This is by no means easy. One is gracefully invited to go beyond “startling strangeness” (Insight: xxii; new editions, xxix) to a Proustian remembering, “membering,” (“the Bridge of Bones”), all this “a sheer leap into the void for the existential subject” (Insight: 539). On the difficulty of reaching the initial strangeness, see McShane, 1978.

spirating our participative (235, 2-10, 27-28; 237, 1) loving of the circumin-
 cessional Divine Spirit (256, 1-3). But the inner word discerningly
 sublated in Faith to the factual status of accepted image is of oneself in
 one's unintelligent and dishonest heuristic normativity. That intimate
 reality demands an ongoing vortex-transformation of the exist-
 ential subject, ranging from the private whirlpooling of inner
 dreams (Adler, 1961) to the communal vortex of differentiated func-
 tional specialization.⁸ However, our present focus is on the spiral of
 graceful theoretic interiority⁹ and its proportionate spiration. That,
 then, to which the reduplicative meaning reaches is a procession from
 infinite understanding of its possibilities and achievements and a
 procession of necessary infinite honesty (183, 29-34). In our concep-
 tion we speak of primary and secondary components of the idea of
 being, and relations of creation,¹⁰ their grasp being mediated to us by
 world process: and now, perhaps, we can glimpse more clearly the
 meaning of the first sentence of "Mission and the Spirit": "man's ...
 self-understanding has to be not only of himself but also of his
 world."¹¹ As the procession of the world is from the understanding of
 creatures (107-109; 182, 20-26; 196, 11-19), so our processing word is called to
 be, and this call becomes luminous to us "*quatenus fit vera sui sibi
 manifestatio et honesta sui acceptatio*" (200, 3-4), where the *sui* is of the
 existential self, self-processing, and the *manifestatio* is the inner
 word of this concrete self-processing. The manifestation can be
 concrete, symbolic, rhetorical, as in reflections of spontaneous sanc-
 tity; or it can be technical, exact, systematic (200, 4-9). The general faithful
 require that the divine persons to which they speak be conscious
 and distinct: the theologian is called to conceive and spirate of
 this consciousness with clarity, as friend and befriended, not un-
 worthy servant (161, 9-13; 50, 13-28), not living in the "sin of backward-
 ness ... of the individuals that fail to live on the level of their times".¹²
 So, the theologian's *Contemplatio ad Amorem Obtinendam* cannot

⁸It is useful to put *Method in Theology*, p. 144, line 27 to p. 145 line 2 into the general context of the communal second time of the temporal subject (*De Deo Trino*, II, 200, lines 10-14).

⁹*Insight*, lines 35-38 on both pp. 186 and 625.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, chapter XIX, sections 4-8 and p. 660, 19 to 669, 14.

¹¹*Third Collection*, p. 23. *De Deo Trino*, II, 201, lines 1-5.

¹²Lonergan, *Third Collection*, "Dialectic of Authority," p. 8.

remain in the symbolic comfort of an already-out-there or in-here or Totally-other: it must move slowly, over the years, spiral-“wise,” vortex-wise, among the creatures that are beings of theoretic meaning, finding a deeper if colder beauty in the theory of emergent probability than in the evolutionary description of the hovering hummingbird. And the cultivation of the inner word of leptons and quarks can surely have a significance *ut ad invisibilium amorem rapiamur*? Only by such struggles can one reach, in a manner that is theologically adequate for our time, the meaning of probability and of Trinitarian providence, and, in so doing, personally give the universe a unity of its finality, the glory of the unity of one intelligent view.¹³

Finally, it seems to me that this core Trinitarian struggle must be a daily reaching, homely yet elitist (Lonergan, 1972: 14, 350-51), Christocentric as we walk the ball of the earth in air breathed by God. But I would emphasize that the daily reaching is not some strange religious piety: such reaching is no stranger to creative people in the world of science, and such scientific procedure is a natural analogue for the process of grasping Eternal Process. So, I return to my initial reflections.

As I pattered through books in the Radcliffe Science Library, I was pleasantly surprised to come across the unmistakable name, Lochlann O’Raifeartaigh, of my graduate colleague in mathematical physics. His article, on “Broken Symmetry” (1968), was worlds away from the quantum electrodynamics that we studied in 1956. In the years between, and since, he has moved laboriously forward, in continuous and discontinuous transpositions of the best available views in the field. He is committed to thinking systematically, honestly, critically; he has no commitment to popularization. His commitment to thinking about the fundamental particles seems to me to be of a different caliber from that of many Christian theologians’ commitment to thinking about the fundamental Persons. Can it be permanently true, beyond the scope, then, of the emergent probability of Cosmopolis, that the children of this world are wiser than the children of light?

Perhaps, as Joan Robinson (1973) wrote a decade or so ago, in a creative attempt at a new undergraduate text in economics, it is time

¹³*Insight*, p. 250, 11. 33-34; also the conclusion of the “Preface” to McShane, 1985.

to start over. Perhaps what we need is some solid undergraduate contemplation. I have to hand two neglected undergraduate texts: Thomas's *Summa Theologiae* (specifically, QQ. 27 ff.) and, of course, Lonergan's *De Deo Trino, II: Pars Systematica*. As I worked on the latter book during my stay in Oxford, I began to think of its possibilities as a new book *Book of Common Prayer*. At present, obviously, it is a book of uncommon prayer. Yet a Trinitarian community of theologians, as such and so beyond community of Faith, requires that the unique analogue for the Christian God (*DDT*, II, 86-92; I, 276-298) that is each of us, in our opaque, intelligible proceedings, become an object of lonely contemplation. This requirement of freedom falls under emergent probability¹⁴ and Trinitarian providence.

¹⁴Here I make no attempt to comment creatively on Lonergan's views of probability or emergence. In the text of "Mission and the Spirit," p. 25, he draws attention to theorems of Bernoulli and Laplace, showing his continued interest in problems of empirical reference, problems that led him to modify the text of *Insight*, p. 66 lines 24 to p. 67 line 2, for the second edition. The theorems are at the origin of the twentieth-century development of Central Limit Theorems dealing with questions of the convergence of probability distribution functions.

Chapter 8 of my *Randomness, Statistics and Emergence* (1971) is a lengthy comment on the modified text of *Insight* as throwing light on such a development and its flaws. There is a variety of less subtle flaws in contemporary theory on probability. Chapter 4 of *Randomness* deals with a common mistake, of both ordinary usage and textbooks, of applying probabilities to singular instances. Chapter 11 focuses on concrete schemes (actual, and realizable), substructures of assemblies, as relevant heuristic units (instead of, for example, genes or gene-pools) for a statistics of emergence or survival. And so on. Lonergan's subtle and unique aggregiform and statistical emergentism has so far had little impact on a scientific community naively and implicitly committed to reductionist conceptualism. Lonergan's own references (see note 3, "Mission and the Spirit") remain the primary source of light on the subject, but they are all too easily read within the truncated contemporary perspective or without the mental exercises of statistical theory, etc., etc.

Which, of course, brings us back, Finnegans: Wake!—"wise," to the beginning: or should we go further and gracefully recognize *Insight* itself as an interesting blob, a condensed map of a genius-climb of twenty-eight years?

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