

Preface: Functional Research

This is the first of what was originally conceived to be twenty-five special volumes of the *Journal of Macrodynamical Analysis*. The volumes were to be a distinctive unit, the distinctiveness being related to the efficiency of the new science that is being advocated by this endeavor. The original plan was ambitious and indeed strained the capacity of those involved in the project. It would be quite foolish of me to attempt any compact presentation here of either the science or the novelty of its anticipated efficiency.¹ The presentation² would have been effectively seeded by the twenty-five volumes, and the external efficiency grounded through the programs generated by the contents of the eighth, sixteenth, twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth volumes in the series.³ As it stands the scaled-back project will produce four volumes. The first volume is my own effort to in functional research. Subsequent volumes will reveal the fledgling

¹ The key profound simple text relevant here is line 16 of Lonergan's *Topics in Education, CWL 10* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 160: "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." This, luminously ingested, shifts all particular sciences into a radically new context of functionality, and it obliges the seeker of an integral heuristic to reach for and articulate a pragmatics of its achievement. My best effort so far (see note 4 below) is "[Arriving in Cosmopolis](#)" (available in my site archives) where I suggest 9011 AD as a hopeful date of operative global identity. The essay is also available in Spanish. See "Llegando A Cosmópolis" on the same webpage.

² *Presentation* has a complex of tricky meanings related, e.g., to the contexts pointed to in notes 1 and 4. Another twist on it is provided by Philip McShane, *Method in Theology: Refinements and Implementations*, chapter 10, "Metaphysical Equivalence and Functional Specialization." The task of the twenty-fifth volume in the series is to tackle the heuristics of ultimate communal multi-creed ('in the far ear,' 'sans creed': see the conclusion of chapter six, "Total Process," of my site Book, *Process: Introducing Themselves to Young (Christian) Minders*. See the text at note 12 below.

³ I note that the numbers given above to the volumes correspond to the numbers of the twenty-five seminars to which they are related. They may not correspond to the numbers of the eventual volumes of *JMDA*. The twenty-five seminars, begun in January of 2011, run at the rate of four per year until Spring 2017. The goings-on of the seminars and its members can be found on [SGEME blog archive](#). Articles of members will be found either there or as part of the *FuSe* Series.]

collaborative efforts of the SGEME seminar participants in functional interpretation, functional history and functional dialectic.⁴

Still, the numbers mentioned in that last sentence beg for some enlightening comments. The 25 is the result of there being three proposed series of eight volumes followed by a single strange volume, volume 25. The number 8 relates to the increasingly evident empirical fact that any mature global human endeavor requires, for the continued refinement of its efficiencies, a division of labor into eight sequentially collaborative groups, the sequence beginning from a grouped sifting of present global success—and failure—and baton-exchanging with controlled creatively through six well-defined⁵ collaborations to the eighth and end member of the sequence, that nudges global success forward towards failing better.⁶

The names of the eight group functions needed are familiar to those to whom these volumes are addressed, but they should be repeated here to give us pause: *research, interpretation, history, dialectic, foundations, doctrines, systematics, communications*. To give us pause? Indeed. That is, alas, the sad significance of the twenty-five volumes: giving pause. When these eight names were first introduced functionally to people interested in the work of Bernard Lonergan, they were already quite familiar, especially to theologians. What was missed by these fixed⁷ unscientific minds was the shocking creative linkage—an identification of specialized function—that lifted these names into a new global context of efficient omnidisciplinary collaboration.

But I should repeat myself: ‘it would be foolish of me etc.’ Two generations of interest in Lonergan’s work have really not changed the character of those minding philosophy and theology. What is needed to shake up such minds is not summary but success, and that success requires a beginning in the normal painful simple exercises that go with introducing people to an established science with which they are quite unfamiliar. Over fifty years ago I had the pleasure of teaching a group of first-rate students the beginning of mathematical physics. We had no bother with the grind of initiation, and certainly none of them followed

⁴ The Society for the Globalization of Effective Methods of Evolving (SGEME) Functional Research Seminar ran from January 2011 to February 2012. The seminars stopped with the completion of the first round of Research, Interpretation, History and Dialectic. Future issues of JMDA will publish a selection of the results.

⁵ A context for thinking about **well-defined** is *Phenomenology and Logic*, CWL 18 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 69-70 Here we are in the open genetic logic of heuristics, indeed dominated by a transcendental Goedelian theorem.

⁶ I am recalling, in my comments on failure, a quip of Samuel Beckett: “No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better” from the prose piece “Worstward Ho.” Written in 1982 it was published in the volume *Nohow On* (London: John Calder Publishers, 1989).

⁷ See note 9 below. It is a lock-in to Linnaeus, layered over by an abundance of descriptive comparisons.

me to my next class, a graduate class in special relativity, to listen and learn in the manner of what *de facto* would have been *haute vulgarization*. One cannot say the same for those interested in this new science. Nor am I talking here of the lazy-minded, but also of the sincere and energetic. It is massively difficult in these axial times for even the most sincere to intussuscept neurochemically the challenge of humanity's climb to the beginnings of serious understanding that necessarily includes self-understanding. Let me talk of this challenge in terms of the second series of eight volumes, and I do so now with a fresh nudge from my present startled preoccupation with the post-graduate Trinitarian core of that second series.⁸

The first series of eight volumes attends to the dynamics of collaboration that is potentially human, whatever one's creed. The third series, strangely, returns to that stance, but with a concrete meaning to 'whatever one's creed' that is held relatively still in the first series. The second series turns to the dynamics of the new science as it is to operate in those whose creed is Christian, and therefore Trinitarian. Here I return to my problem of, and with, the sincere but lazy-minded. I need to be brutally concrete. Above I mentioned the foolish reading of the eight names *research*, etc... But now I wish you to attend to a possibly foolish reading of a relevant single paragraph of Lonergan's *Method in Theology*. It is the paragraph that runs from line 6 to line 12 of page 291. Indeed, should I not repeat it here, so that we all might read it foolishly, confined in neurochemical patterns of our axial superego?⁹

⁸ Curiously, my first venture into this area was in 1961, the year I first met Lonergan. The essay was published the following year in *Theological Studies*. See Philip McShane, "The Hypothesis of Intelligible Relations in God." *Theological Studies* 23 (1962), 545-568.

My most recent efforts are towards an emergent Trinitarian spirituality related to the identification of the **clasp** of charity with a participation in the personality of the third divine person, and the identification of our central grace with a strangely integral participation in the two other divine personalities (See Lonergan, *CWL* 12, 473; *Method*, 342). The consequent pilgrim dynamics sublates Thomas' reach for vestiges of the trinity in finitude, personally and intimately poisoning each of us as a we-four, sublating the "Christ in me" of *Romans* 8 into a dynamic circumincessional fleshed reach for understanding that "penetrates to the physiological level" (*CWL* 3, 763) and carries forward our trinitarian chemistry towards an integral genetic *eschaton* of endless adoption. A large task. *FuSe* 31, the lead into the seminars on Christian Categories, already on the site, would be a help, and there is a broad background in my two essays: [1] "The Hypothesis of a Non-Accidental Human Participation in the Divine Active Spiration." *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 2.2 (2011); [2] *Method in Theology 101 AD 9011. The Road to Religious Reality* (Axial Publishing, 2012).

⁹ On the axial superego, see the site essay *Humus 2: "Vis Cogitativa: Contemporary Defective Patterns of Anticipation."* William Zanardi enlarges on the topic in the context of contemporary neuroscience in Appendix D of *FuSe* 12. His lengthy essay is titled "Preconceptual

“The third set of special categories moves from our loving to the loving source of our love. The Christian tradition makes explicit our implicit intending of God in all our intending by speaking of the Spirit that is given to us, of the Son who redeemed us, of the Father who sent the Son and with the Son sends the Spirit, and of our future destiny when we shall know, not in a glass darkly, but face to face.”

Did you perhaps read that paragraph now, or at least initially, without any inner chemicalization of the Grand Canyon¹⁰ of meaning presented in witty brutality four pages back? “Such differentiation vastly enriches the initial nest of terms and relations. From such a broadened base one can go on...”¹¹ Are you still missing the pointing in these pages to a Towering Standard Model quite beyond undergraduate learning, a graduate product of a later age, the fruit of a stepped-up contemplation that is to parallel the new-world contemplative physics? And further, there is the missing bone-tuning to the fact that the three fundamental particles of being are infinitely more elusive to human understanding than quarks.¹² And further still, that Paul and Lonergan are quite off the mark in the ‘face to face’ business: we shall ‘ownly’ see in a glass lightly. But that is the topic of the twenty-fifth volume.¹³ And, of course, the topic of the ninth volume is the set of anomalies that surround those three fundamental particles flexed into cosmic chemistry.

But have I forgotten my self-cautioning regarding compactive foolishness? I am piccolo-playing in the symphony of the world’s words, like a hope-filled Goldmund: “the letters spread out” and you are “set thinking of all the streams and rivers in the world, “¹⁴ and the roots of that thinking are set to gracefully catalyse your chemicals into feeling that “‘all we know is somehow with us ... it lurks behind the scenes.’ Skin within are molecules of cosmic all, cauled, calling.”¹⁵

And that paragraph only added to the compactive foolishness. But it also helps towards your appreciating my effort to avoid compactness in the volumes to follow. This was a major concern for me, especially in this first volume. What was I to do to communicate effectively the results of our three-month effort to tune ourselves into the operations of functional research? The Introduction gives some pointers on my struggle and, of

Apprehension and the Evaluation of Objects.”

¹⁰ I discuss another key **Grand Canyon** in *FuSe 15*, “The Future of Functional History.” Such **Grand Canyons** focus the general failure titled *The Existential Gap*. See Lonergan, *Phenomenology and Logic*, CWL 18, the index under ‘Existential.’

¹¹ *Method*, 287.

¹² Relevant here is some such diagramming as the Metaword W_3 , reproduced in various places, e.g. page 161 of Pierrot Lambert and Philip McShane, *Bernard Lonergan: His Life and Leading Ideas*, (Axial Publishing, 2011).

¹³ See note 2 above.

¹⁴ Herman Hesse, *Narcissus and Goldmund* (Penguin, 1971), 61.

¹⁵ Philip McShane, *Lack in the Beingstalk* (Axial Publishing, 2010), 66.

course, yours. What we found in the seminar was that the climb to glimpsing the new research-style was quite startling. That led me to the decision to try to retain as much of the atmosphere and the pace of the struggle as possible. So, the seven chapters that follow the Introduction are virtually identical to the *FuSes* to which they correspond in the website: Chapter 1 corresponds to *FuSe* 3, and so on up to Chapter 7 which corresponds to *FuSe* 9. Ideally, of course, you would spend three months messing in some style that parallels our messy struggle. Do your best to tune into something equivalent.

Our three months, and questions raised by participants, led me to introduce various additional topics, yet these additions are key to our expected break-through. Further, this first volume is pretty-well all my own writing, but my hope is that later volumes will be increasingly ours rather than mine.¹⁶ This beginning is very much the fruit of my own long climb which began in 1966, when Lonergan sketched for me the global collaborative challenge.¹⁷ And within that climb there were the recent years of climbing that led to the pragmatic strategy sketched here. I could not expect those sharing my first seminar to resonate with sufficient chemicality to contribute to this odd start to the battle against present human folly.

What might the effect of this start be? A large dose of luck meshed with emergent good will might see effects in the year of the appearance of this volume: is it too much to expect that 2012, the 40th anniversary of the publication of *Method in Theology*, be the year when the invitation to functional collaboration is finally taken seriously enough to have it as a topic in Lonergan gatherings? Indeed, I would say that it is far too much to expect. My informed suspicion is that it could take the annoying presence of all 25 volumes to stir the stale contented rhythms of Lonerganism. But what of the larger world of sciences, technologies, arts? What of the screaming needs of economics and ecology? Might they not find their internal ways towards functional collaboratively in some shaky tunneling semblance of Lonergan's foresight? And perhaps Lonergan's foresight included such a twist of probabilities? "Is my proposal utopian? It asks merely for creativity, for an

¹⁶ You will find evidence of a small, more expansive, step forward in Patrick Brown and James Duffy (eds), *Seeding Global Collaboration* (Vancouver: Axial Press, 2016). In particular with respect to Functional Research, see Robert Henman's article "Functional Research in Neuroscience." A review of Henman's recent book *Neuroscience and Generalized Empirical Method* (Vancouver: Axial Press, 2016) appears in this volume of *JMDA*.

¹⁷ I went on, in 1969, to illustrate that globality by revealing the need for the collaboration in musicology in an essay, "Music and Self-Meaning." The effort was presented at the First International Lonergan Conference in Florida, 1970. It fell on deaf ears. The essay is available on www.philipmcshane as the second chapter of [The Shaping of the Foundations](#).

interdisciplinary theory that at first will be denounced as absurd, then will be admitted to be true but obvious and insignificant, and perhaps finally be regarded as so important that its adversaries will claim that they themselves discovered it.”¹⁸

¹⁸ The conclusion of Lonergan’s essay “Healing and Creating in History” available both in *A Third Collection* (New York: Paulist Press, 1975), 100-107 and in his *Macroeconomic Dynamics: An Essay in Circulation Analysis*, *CWL* 15 (1999), 97-106.