

ON THE STILE OF A CRUCIAL EXPERIMENT

Philip McShane

This little essay is to be “in the style of the crucial experiment.”¹ It is an experiment that “calls out” for an encounter of me with you. Think yourself out of the context of learned discourse. Indeed, it helps, in that outing, to let fancy carry your neuromolecules into quite different zones, patterns of memories and fantasies that are quite off the academic track that supereggs on your cranial molecules.² Two fantasylands occur to me immediately. There was the filmed gunfight at the O.K. Corral, a 30-second shootout with Virgil and Morgan Earp, supported by Doc Holliday, calling out members of a loosely organized group of outlaws called *The Cowboys*, which took place at about 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 26, 1881, in Tombstone, Arizona Territory. It was a calling-out of the usual sort in Western films, with the good guys and the bad guys clearly identified.

Am I thinking of you as the bad guy and vice versa? That, really, is up to you thinking about me, since I am identified here easily by you, and, while I can think of lots of bad gals and guys for my encounter, you may be, intellectually, my BFF, as teens text it.

Yet there is a sense in which, in the audience I am principally addressing, there are no bad gals or guys. There are simply people, to some extent unwittingly, sitting on the stile, as my title puts it. Again, I ask you to veer away from the neurodynamics of the academy, and I do not wish you to just slide over to thinking of the sitting in game-judgment that is associated in Ireland with “the hurler on the ditch” or in the USA with Monday-morning quarterbacking. I wish you rather to catch the mood of a melancholy famine-days Irish song which I quote immediately. It would be better if I sang it in its quaint gloomy rhythms, but you can’t have everything. I quote the first and the last verses of seven verses.

¹ Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972) 253; vol. 14, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Robert M. Doran and John D. Didosky (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018) 237.

² On the superego, see *Humus* 2, “Vis Cogitativa: Contemporary Defective Patterns of Anticipation” and *Humus* 6, “Repatterning the Superegos’ Molecular Religiosity.” These essays are available at: <http://www.philipmshane.org/humus>.

I'm sitting on the stile, Mary, / Where we sat side by side
 On that bright May morning long ago, / When first you were my bride.
 The corn was springing fresh and green, / And the lark sang loud and high
 And the red was in your lips, Mary, / And the love-light in your eyes.

And often in those grand old woods / I will sit, and shut my eyes.
 And my mind will ramble back again / To the place where Mary lies;
 And I'll think I see that little stile / Where we sat side by side.
 And the springing corn, and the bright May morn, / When first you were my
 bride.

The third verse of the song locates the stile near the church:

'Tis but a step down yonder lane, / And the little church stands near,
 The church where we were wed, Mary, / I see the spire from here.

Have you soaked in something of that mood, found an echo of it, perhaps, in your own nation's story? There is a calling heard there quite different from Virgil Earp's calling out The Cowboys. What is the calling? Is it not the goodly calling to accept fate, providence, whatever? "If only we reflect, we come to realize that a similar though far from identical helplessness is the lot of all men."³ Carry your musing and fantasy on into "the days of our lives" that is not a television program but a matter of reflective poise on changes of personal doings.

If in them we are not too notably the unconditioned masters, then how much less in the daily routine on which we seldom reflect, which we leave to the control of custom and fashion? Finally, when we turn to broader issues, to prosperity and slumps, to the whims of dictators or of democratic public opinion, to peace and war, to national ambitions and enmities, to the historical forces immovably rooted in the past yet powerfully operative in the present, then we must confess that even we are no more than atoms, each indeed autonomous within his narrow orbit, for each is free, yet together swept in a swirling mass down the cataract of life to the serene pool of a green churchyard.⁴

³ Lonergan, "The Mystical Body and the Sacraments," *Shorter Papers*, vol. 20, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Robert C. Croken, Robert M. Doran, and H. Daniel Monsour (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007) 78.

⁴ Lonergan, "The Mystical Body and the Sacraments" 78.

But now broaden even more the issues, and think of the Irish song's hero and Virgil Earp as both called out "under the control of custom and fashion," "immovably rooted in the past yet powerfully operative in the present," "each autonomous within his narrow orbit." Even the Monday-morning quarterback is "called out" by convention.⁵

And you? Are you singing in your own tongue or type or tribe, "I'm sitting on the stile"? And indeed, it may be the stile and style of the Monday-morning quarterback that we may well wish to question here, as we sit in our styles now.

"The function of dialectic will be ... to provide a technique that objectifies subjective differences."⁶ I am quoting a key sentence of *Method in Theology*, and the CWL 14 text adds, in a footnote, a comment from Lonergan's Dublin lecture in 1971: "Dialectic aims at being a methodical equivalent in the realms of value judgments to the crucial experiment in science. It isn't quite methodical but it moves towards it. It aims at being something methodical but methodical in a very, very delicate area, namely that of value judgments." The editors' note ends, rightly, by pointing to a later comment, "such an objectification of subjectivity is in the style of a crucial experiment."⁷ We surely need to pause over the "such" of this very, very delicate area.

But—unless your reading is relatively mindless—you already have its flavor, already are stricken here in such a very, very delicate area. And I too am stricken: it is a 'we' that is involved, is it not? Are you not poised to take offense? And, even if you are not, are you not sitting psychically near the church to which you are wed—whatever shape its building, spire and burial ground—you in this one-sided exchange with me, with a

⁵ It is no great leap to turn to think of convention in the usual and restricted sense of a gathering at a conference or workshop. And, while my message is a global one, I think and talk here of "Lonergan gatherings," be they workshops or classrooms or theses-directings. My message is, as you may expect, unconventional. I quote Fr. Frederick Crowe as backup, my Doc Holiday. "Is there not room for a measure of bluntness at this stage?" "The Exigent Mind," *Spirit as Inquiry: Studies in Honor of Bernard Lonergan*, (Chicago: Saint Xavier College, 1964) 27. But in fact, as we shall see, my backup gun is Bernard Lonergan as he looked for an effective technique for dialectic: his poise is, on a strange higher level, identical with that of Fred Crowe, five years later. See the next note.

⁶ Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 235; CWL 14, 221.

⁷ Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 253; CWL 14, 237.

fermenting wish, however foggy or philosophic, to share this questioning of Monday-morning quarterbacking?

Have I got you teetering towards a value judgment about that sharing? Is your usual poise more like the song's hero's poise, mournfully viewing the church and its contents, or are you like Virgil Earp, eyeing the goings-on of The Cowboys? Or is your poise, perhaps, not mournful but detachedly interested, wanting to get a "hurler on the ditch" view of this quaint Irishman's view of "the crucial experiment"? Have I here and now disturbed your poise, itched you? You couldn't have been now led by me to itch to do the crucial experiment unless the "very, very delicate area" were already familiar to you, in which case, I would like to think, you already share my itch and hope for a boosting and guidance of that itch.⁸ Have I perhaps brought you to itch for some decent clarity of statement instead of this ramble round guns and graves? Still, you might pause regarding this clarity—a 'calling out' from conceptualism—and bow to the opinion of Bernard Lonergan. We are "headed towards an end that is unknown and as yet cannot be disclosed; from the viewpoint of the pupil, it proceeds by cajoling or forcing attention and not by explaining the intended goal and inviting an intelligent and reasonable cooperation."⁹

But, tell me, tell me: really, tell yourself, how did your psyche's molecules move through the nine words, "we are headed towards an end that is unknown"? Were those molecules in a meta-Proustian poise before a little cake, a sliver of music, a "flower in the crannied wall"?¹⁰

⁸ The main context of this little essay is my book of the summer of 2019, *The Future: Core Precepts of Supramolecular Method and Nanochemistry* (Vancouver: Axial Publishing, 2019). The proximate context is the appendix to that book, with its odd name *Assenditch*. The name echoes Lonergan's reference to Topsy's remark: "when she was asked how she came into the world she said, 'Ah 'spect ah just grow'd.'" "The Mediation of Christ in Prayer," *Philosophical and Theological Papers, 1958–1964*, vol. 6. *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Robert C. Croken, Frederick E. Crowe, and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) 179. One reading of my title is "Ah send itch," an itch towards a control of personal and historical growth.

⁹ CWL 3, *Insight* 423, lines 2–6.

¹⁰ The final quote above is Lonergan's reference on page 31 of *For a New Political Economy* (vol. 21, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Philip McShane [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998]) to Tennyson's short poem (see my note there on page 31). The Proust references are to his sources of memory's itch towards growth.

A year ago I paused over a single word, *convergence*. That pause over the third word of the title *The Coming Convergence of World Religions* battered me uphill to see beyond all sorts of interested quarterbacking to a meaning of the word *convergence* that pushed me into writing a final section of five articles whose title talked of getting off the stile in all its guises: “Developing Characters of Craving.”¹¹ Six weeks ago—in late July of 2019—I begin to think of you and me as Supermolecules with a strange W-enzyme seeding a discomfort in each of us and in all of finitude and at the end of my journey found a shocking foothold in the future in a final footnote in *The Future*.¹² Should I share that footnote now with you? But what, pray, is that sharing, and what is your present sharing of that W-enzyme’s craving? Well, “well of loneliness,”¹³ supermolecule,¹⁴ here it comes, but not just on its own.¹⁵ As I pause over this itch-identification it

¹¹ My five articles appeared in *Divyadaan* 30/1 (2019), titled “The Coming Convergence of World Responsiveness,” “Steps Towards Effectively Converging Religions,” “Converging Religions to Effective Historical Intervention,” “Converging Religions to Being InTo Love With Jesus EtC.,” and “Finding an Effective Economist: A Central Theological Challenge.” The section referred to concludes that fifth article.

¹² The full title of the book is *The Future: Core Precepts of Supramolecular Method and Nanochemistry*. The title originated from a recent book entitled *Core Concepts of Supramolecular Chemistry and Nanochemistry* by Jonathan Steed, David Turner, and Karl Wallace (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2007). On the W-enzyme, see note 14 below.

¹³ “The Well of Loneliness” is the title of chapter 19 of *The Allure of the Compelling Genius of History* (Vancouver: Axial Publishing, 2015), a chapter which parallels the nineteenth chapter of *Insight*.

¹⁴ “Supermolecule” is a mode of address used for the reader in the book referred to in note 12. Within you, supermolecule, there is an enzyme specified, very deliberately, in a vague manner as the *W-enzyme*, where W covers such experiences as wondering, whatting, “wising up,” wanting, wavering, willing.

¹⁵ So far you may have picked up my focus on the piece of Lonergan’s writing that I have called *Lonergan’s 1833 Overture* (see note 41 below), and your pickup is correct, but there is the need to involve us slowly in the context and content. That involvement is a task for this next millennium. My article “Method in Theology: ASAFACt” (available at: <http://www.philipmeshane.org/website-articles>), written in June of 2019, puts you in the picture, but better still chapter three of *The Future*. Perhaps unpacking ASAFACt would help. The *Lonergan 1833 Overture* asks for an ASsembly of a suggested advance; the technique requires the participant’s AFfirmed foundations; the joining in is an ACT, which

came to my W-enzyme's craving that I should share the lead-in madness of Lonergan and indeed leave the footnote as it is, just a footnote—now note 16—that ends my little red book. So I quote:

And how better to end my complex yet simple Lad's and Lass's Itch Stand than with Lonergan's stand at age 30, ending his first and second objectification of his own exercise, his own crucifying experiment, thus:

We have mentioned the fact that the greatest evil in the world is the evil that is concretized in the historic flow, the capital of injustice that hangs like a pall over every brilliant thing, that makes men and nations groan over others' glory, that provokes anger and suicide and dire wars, that culminates in the dull mind and sluggish body of the enslaved people or the decayed culture.

The Christian counterpiece to this in the Christian victory over sin is charity. For charity becomes not angry over wrongs, charity does not nourish hatred or threaten war, charity does not despair; charity is an eternal fire of optimism and of energy, dismayed at naught, rebuked by none, tireless, determined, deliberate; with deepest thought and unbounded spontaneity charity ever strives, struggles, labours, exhorts, implores, prays for the betterment of the unit action of man, for the effective rule of sweetness and light, for a fuller manifestation of what charity loves, Wisdom Divine, the Word made Flesh.

The Sovereign Pontiff has proclaimed the Kingship of Christ. Do you know His Kingdom?

'In the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared on the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills: and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say: Come, and let us go to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob: and he will teach us his ways and we will walk in his paths. For the law shall come forth from Sion: and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge the Gentiles and rebuke many people: and they shall turn their swords

carries you "off the stile" to do something effective, the beginnings of the full implementation Lonergan envisaged in his 1934 "Essay in Fundamental Sociology," reprinted in Michael Shute, *Lonergan's Early Economic Research* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010). There is a tricky pointing in all this about which it is difficult to be brief: your effort to AF brings forth a clash between fruitless involvement in "intentionality analysis" (something explanatorily beyond present cultures) and committed involvement in an effective effort to seriously understand.

into ploughshares and their spears into sickles. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation: neither shall they be exercised any more to war. (Isaiah 2:2–4).

Is this to be taken literally or is it figure? It would be fair and fine, indeed, to think it no figure.¹⁶

You have, I hope, weaved or waded your supermolecular way through that strange note to “find yourself”¹⁷ moved a little off the stile, the ditch, the

¹⁶ Lonergan, “Essay in Fundamental Sociology” 43–44. Recall now what might be called the central heuristic nudge of this 1934 essay. It is his brilliant answer to the question, “What is progress?” “It is a matter of intelligence. Intellect is understanding of sensible data. It is the guiding form, statistically effective, of human action transforming the sensible data of life. Finally, it is a fresh intellectual synthesis understanding the new situation created by the old intellectual form and providing a statistically effective form for the next cycle of human action that will bring forth in reality the incompleteness of the later act of intellect by setting it new problems.” (“Essay in Fundamental Sociology” 20.) The itch I write of in this essay, and in this book—starting with its seemingly simplistic revised ‘box’ diagram and the generic W-enzyme—is a strategic sensing that the *Method of The Future* book should have been first, should be first, with *Insight* to follow. ‘Should have been’ suggests a different life for Lonergan, and yes, I throw that fantasy-suggestion out to you. Think, for instance, how his first push was for a reform of the great need for the cycling in of a reformation towards a non-bureaucratic global economics. But his Thomist studies led him into minding minding, seeding in his psyche the venture of *Insight*, to be followed by an undetermined second volume. Think, further, wildly, of *Insight* as the first of his last quartets. Minding minding adequately is thus postponed in favour of some *Razumovski Quartets* weaved round the theme of cycling. The cycling would be tuned to a vague broad spiraling of ‘intelligence’ towards “a statistically effective form for the next cycle of human action.” Those quartets would eventually lead to a blossoming of an effective minding of intelligence itself in the molecular reality of its wants. Leap crazily now to think of this little book as one of those *Razumovski Quartets*, and a crazier leap might see chapters 15, 16, 17, and 18 of *Insight*, as the four movements of that piece of the last quartets that is no. 16 of Opus 135. Is a later *Grosse Fugue* to be some leap into the music of the intentionalities in the W-enzyme? Meantime let our W-enzyme, within a tottering W₃, Weave round—meeting Beethoven in meta-Ludwig fashion—*Fidelio*’s Prisoners’ Chorus, *O welche Lust*: “Oh what lust, in the open air / to lift the breath easily / Only here, only here, is life.”

swirl of the “swirling mass” down the cataract of life, to a poise with the prisoners in *Fidelio* permitted to breathe the air beyond the walls. “*O welche Lust*: “Oh what lust!” Is it the shimmering of a *moi intime* that tilts you towards moving from some stile of thinking life to “the style of the crucial experiment”?

But what is the style of the crucial experiment?

Here we must pause to weave our loneliness elliptically round the two foci of that ellipticity that strangely coincide: there is the phyletic focus and the ontic focus.¹⁸

Think, first, phyletically, historically, reaching skimmingly through the long story of humanity’s thousands of millennia with the likes still to come.¹⁹ Then we can come together to read my title as a question about all of us religiously-touched people. Are we on the stile in a crucial experiment of humanity’s present engineers?

That question mark surely weaves itself round your W-enzyme? What is this crucial experiment? Who are these engineers? And what is their experiment? Perhaps I might symbolize the entire destructiveness with the destruction of air, real air, cultural air. And if your W-enzyme is “on the stile of Burckhardt rather than Ranke,” refined components of care within that W-enzyme will add levels of the vibrato of effective concern, perhaps rising to a psychic singing with *Fidelio*’s Prisoners’ Chorus, *O welche Lust*: “Oh what lust, in the open air / to lift the breath easily / Only here, only here, is life.”

¹⁷ “Find yourself”? This is a challenge way beyond Proust’s pointings, or Joyce’s appeal to Mallarmé about “reading the book of himself.” I am writing to you as a possible founder-member of a frail Tower of Able that would care for humanity in the positive Anthropocene age. The finding then involves the journey of the Interior Lighthouse, of which I have already written abundantly. See the essays cited in “The Coming Convergence of World Responsiveness,” *Divyadaan* 30/1 (2019) 30, n. 41. More in the following note.

¹⁸ “We must pause”: indeed. That is the core of the invitation of the two final chapters of *Phenomenology and Logic* (vol. 18, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, ed. Philip McShane [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001]) that deal with the “drifting” of persons and periods (see CWL 18 index under *drifting*) that hide under stile-sitting or arms-racing.

¹⁹ Add to the venture pointed to in the previous two notes the further task of envisaging the *Eschaton*. See the section on the *Eschaton* in Philip McShane, “*Insight and the Trivialization of History*,” *Divyadaan* 28/1 (2017) 125–28.

Again, who are the engineers and how are we to oppose them effectively?²⁰ Might we begin a listing with those who sicken our mountains and rivers and forests and medicines and credits and credentials and crania? Might you take the time, perhaps sitting on some stile, to muse over those who “for at least two centuries, through doctrines on politics, economics, education, and through ever further doctrines, have been trying to remake man, and have done not a little to make life unlivable?”²¹

I am quoting the 55-year-old Lonergan here, echoing refinedly the 30-year-old’s appeal to us to step off the stile of Ranke, asking us to oppose the normal telling of our story non-functionally by leaning well²² into the W-enzyme’s best in us of asking with effective ontic and phyletic focus “What is progress?”²³ We are back, here, with and within the final note 51 of *The Future: Core Precepts of Supramolecular Method and Nanochemistry*, the note numbered here “16.” But my paragraph lifts his thinking into a later context, a context that was unclear to him in 1934, and indeed one might take as symbolic of his moves through that decade the question he posed at the end of a long letter to a superior: “What on earth is to be done?”²⁴ Right through that following decade, of course, he battled forward towards “a resolute and effective intervention in this historical process”²⁵ in the matter of killing off sick and destructive mythological economics, but that was a private climb while he, yes, moved in the style,

²⁰ The question is of “a resolute and effective intervention in this historical process” (CWL 18, *Phenomenology and Logic* 306), of making a truth of the slim claim of Lonergan in CWL 3, *Insight* 766, line 29: “theology possesses a twofold relevance to empirical human science.”

²¹ Lonergan, *Topics in Education: The Cincinnati Lectures of 1959 on Philosophy of Education*, vol. 10, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, edited by Robert M. Doran and Frederick E. Crowe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993) 232.

²² “Well” is to be the end of a long journey in this millennium. The potential personalities of the Tower of Able that I use to sketch the full functional enterprise will not easily move from “sitting on the stile” or the style of Ranke to considering history, luminously and effectively, as part of engineering human progress.

²³ The full text of his answer to his 1934 question appears above in note 16.

²⁴ The question occurs at the end of a ten-page letter to a Jesuit superior, written in January of 1935. It was not well received. The full letter is reproduced in Pierrot Lambert and Philip McShane, *Bernard Lonergan: His Life and Leading Ideas* (Vancouver: Axial Publishing, 2010) 144–54.

²⁵ I repeat the “slogan” from note 20 above.

sat on the stile, of his training in religious sciences. My note—note 16 here—remarks that his “Thomist studies led him into minding minding, seeding in his psyche the venture of *Insight*, to be followed by an undetermined second volume.”²⁶

Was the minding of minding a mistake, a derailment, a providential detour, a tragic evolutionary oddity?²⁷ That is a large and tricky question, with hints in note 16 that echo previous efforts of mine to understand Lonergan’s battle with the adverse circumstances of his life. We slide past the question, since our interest—is it not?—is in our own battle with the circumstances of our lives. Are we in an O.K. Corral, sitting on a stile, chanting about the church’s, mosque’s, temple’s, synagogue’s, gurdwara’s fate?

It happens that our question is helped by the two end chapters of one of Lonergan’s great minding of minding efforts: the two weeks of 1957 when he was minding first mathematical logic and then existentialism.²⁸ Those two chapters bring us back, or rather forward, to the mood of the mid-1930s. Lonergan “calls out” each of us, “in a very, very delicate area,”²⁹ when he talks of “a call to authenticity in all subjects, an invitation to understand something about the process of human history, and a summons to decisiveness at a rather critical moment in the historical process.”³⁰

Of course, we are “in a very, very delicate area” only if we are tuning ourselves, our W-enzyme, to what Lonergan calls “the field.”³¹ Without

²⁶ See note 16 above.

²⁷ I refer to the theoretics of evolutionary sports. The meaning of such sports only emerges from later contexts of finitude’s flow.

²⁸ Listening to him speak and weaving that speaking into the volume mentioned in note 20 was quite an adventure. It is an adventure you can attempt to share in some Dionysian reach. But certainly my nudging here opens you to reading those two final chapters in fresh molecular patterns of appeal and threat.

²⁹ I am repeating this phrase, but your problem is to take a meta-Proustian stand against it being a repeat in your molecular loneliness. Think of the various cycles of this note with notes 17 and 54, doing such cycles in the battle against “drifting” that crystallize in Maslow’s challenge “less than 1% of adults grow.” 17 + 29 + 54 add up to 100: might you find the nudge of them adding up to an escape by you from the axial 99%?

³⁰ Lonergan, CWL 18, *Phenomenology and Logic* 300.

³¹ Lonergan, CWL 18, *Phenomenology and Logic* 199: “As defined, the horizon is a relative term: what is meaningless-to-me may or may not be meaningless absolutely. By way of contrast, we shall speak of the *field*: what is beyond the

some level of that tuning we are drifting, perhaps quite busily, most likely in a richly named cutoff “habitat.”³² There is in each of us, in our chemistry, an existential gap. “The existential gap is the difference, greater or less, between one’s horizon on oneself and what really one is. Again, the existential gap is the gap between what is overt in what one is and what is covert in what one is.”³³ How is your reading here? Are you with me, with Lonergan? Is there, for you now, a gap? Lonergan gives a neat pointer half way down the page I just quoted. “It is not the problem of agreeing with ... It is the problem of meaning as much as ...”³⁴ How tuned are you to your existential gap; to “all that is lacking”³⁵ in your “series of zones from the ego or *moi intime* to the outer rind of the persona”?³⁶ And, heavens, are you up to exposing the gaps? Is the hero of that old song up to ending the “sitting on the stile, Mary” and rising to being “at pains not to conceal his tracks but to lay all his cards on the table”³⁷ later in that day, later in that life?

How about you, Tom, Dick, or Mary? Are we not “in a very, very delicate area”? “I am to be my little self.”³⁸ Thus writes Lonergan about a decade after he made his indelicate, indeed cruel, successful effort “to provide a technique that objectifies subjective differences.”³⁹ And later in

field is meaningless absolutely, insignificant absolutely, insoluble absolutely. The field is *the* universe, but my horizon defines *my* universe.” The italics are Lonergan’s, since the text came from his notes.

³² I refer here to CWL 3, *Insight* 498, line 11. The page is worth contemplating as pointing you beyond all stiles to the field (of the previous note), so that you are “confronted with a universe of being in which you find yourself” (line 22) and it comes, in the contemplative patience mentioned in notes 17–19 above, to “dominate your whole way of life.” (line 15)

³³ Lonergan, CWL 18, *Phenomenology and Logic* 203. I am quoting here from Lonergan’s lecture notes, but not maintaining the format of those notes which I preserved while presenting them in the volume.

³⁴ Lonergan, CWL 18, *Phenomenology and Logic* 203.

³⁵ Lonergan, CWL 3, *Insight* 559, line 24.

³⁶ Lonergan, CWL 3, *Insight* 495.

³⁷ Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 193; CWL 14, 180.

³⁸ Lonergan, “Philosophy and the Religious Phenomenon,” in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965–1980*, vol. 17, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Robert Croken and Robert Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004) 392.

³⁹ Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 235; CWL 14, 221.

that referenced essay he recalls that strategy, adding the neatness of it in shifting from Thomas Kuhn's view "that mistaken ideas that once were dominant are not so much refuted as abandoned."⁴⁰ It is as well to quote fully Lonergan's presentation here, talking the same discomfiting talk as he did in what I call *Lonergan's 1833 Overture*.⁴¹

Investigators are urged both to expand what they consider authentic in the followers of a religion they are studying and, as well, to reverse what they consider unauthentic. The result will be a projective test in which interpreters reveal their own notions of authenticity and unauthenticity both to others and to themselves. In the short run both the more authentic will discover what they have in common, and so too will the less authentic. In the long run the authentic should be able to reveal the strength of their position by the penetration of their investigations, by the growing number in the scientific community attracted to their assumptions and procedures, and eventually by the reduction of the opposition of the hard-line dogmatists that defend an inadequate method no matter what its deficiencies.⁴²

Halt soon, at the end of this 50-word sentence, and think that you may be adding one to the number of people that did not halt here, e.g., to ask, getting off the stile, about the paragraph, or even about the ways in which "I may be a hard-line dogmatist."

Obviously, I am calling you out, out of or out to your O.K. Corral, away from you sitting on some stile, in some style of chanting.⁴³ If you halted and mused seriously, then you are into a sound bite of metaphysics, an integral conception of normative reading that points you to work

⁴⁰ Lonergan, CWL 17, "Philosophy and the Religious Phenomenon" 403–4.

⁴¹ So-called because the passage runs from line 18 to 33 of the first edition of *Method in Theology*. They are obviously an overture, a calling-out. I see no reason to change the name for the occurrence of the overture in CWL 14, page 234, lines 14–27.

⁴² Lonergan, CWL 17, "Philosophy and the Religious Phenomenon" 403.

⁴³ I think, fancifully, of the spectrum of theological chantings in all present religiosities as paralleling the singing of Frère Jacques that desperately needs something like its sublation by Mahler into his First Symphony. "We are just upsidedown singing whatever the dimkins mummer allalilty she pulls inner out heads. This is not the end of this no manner means." James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (New York: The Viking Press, 1939) 373.

towards a statistics of implementation.⁴⁴ Think even of the editors of CWL volume 17, who consider this essay as “among the most important pieces Lonergan ever wrote.”⁴⁵ And, yes, I am calling them out too. Find now, with a grin, a new meaning of Lonergan’s end words—especially *count*—of CWL 4, *Collection*. “What will count is a perhaps not numerous center, big enough to be a home in both the old and the new, painstaking enough to work out one by one the transitions to be made, strong enough to refuse half measures and insist on complete solutions even though it has to wait.”⁴⁶

Are you prepared to count The Cowboys, as Virgil and Morgan and Doc Holliday were, walking towards a strategic poise in that O.K. Corral? I am distractedly but relevantly thinking now of that other straight-talkin’ Virgil of the West, Virgil Cole, and of his monosyllabic style of answer, “Yep” “Am” “Is.”⁴⁷ I am thinking of the mournful Celt, standard Irish-type sitting on the stile of complaint, a political product of the axial age and the British Empire, not insisting on complete or even shabby solutions. Was boating to America a complete solution? Or were we closer to a solution when the schoolteacher Patrick Pearse walked into the General Post Office in Dublin on Easter Monday of 1916?⁴⁸ But I am distracted, too, by notions of politics and politeness. “Doctrines that are embarrassing will not be mentioned in polite company.”⁴⁹ The doctrine that Lonergan presents in the paragraph at note 42 above is neither polite nor politic. Well, as E. E. Cummings writes in a relevant poem, “a politician is an arse upon / which everyone has sat except a man.” Are you prepared to rise up

⁴⁴ The immediate reference is to the description of metaphysics at the bottom of page 416 of *Insight*. The echo is of Lonergan’s *Essay on Fundamental Sociology* page 20.

⁴⁵ “Editors’ Preface,” CWL 17, *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965–1980* xiv.

⁴⁶ “Dimensions of Meaning,” in *Collection*, vol. 4 *Collected Works of Bernard*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988) 245.

⁴⁷ Marshal Virgil Cole is a fictional character created by Robert Parker who survives Parker’s death by being authored on by others. The most recent novel is *Buckskin* by Robert Knott (New York: Putnam, 2019).

⁴⁸ I began the *Cantower* series (see note 58 below) with an eye on this gallant revolution against an empire, Easter Monday of 1916, on Easter Monday, April 1st (LOL!), 2005.

⁴⁹ Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 299; CWL 14, 279.

off your stile, leave mourning Mary or Heidegger or Husserl behind, and count the Cowboys in your fermenting field of vision?

Might I begin the count, starting back in the early 1960s, when I now see with discomfoting W-enzyme clarity that “I Started a Joke” when I wrote with enthusiasm “The Contemporary Thomism of Bernard Lonergan”?⁵⁰ A decade later, at the First International Lonergan Conference in 1970, I sniffed but really did not get the joke. How many cowboys were in Florida? And, of course, cowgirls. I recall one of our round-table discussion when one of the members remarked that he could go all the way up the ladder of *Insight* to the 18th rung, but the 19th was just too much. I still recall vividly my answer. “The trouble with you, Joe {his name is not Joe, but he is not dead yet, so ...}, is that you missed the first rung.” Now there’s stuff that is “methodical in a very, very delicate area.”⁵¹ The conference and its mass of papers rolled on into print,⁵² a print that I recognize now as heavily into enriched “academic disciplines”⁵³ initial meanings.⁵⁴ Lonergan’s great heuristic of redemption from such

⁵⁰ The article appeared in *Philosophical Studies* (Ireland) 1962. It is available at: <http://www.philipmcshane.org/published-articles>. I commented on it relevantly in the context of the Bee Gees’ song “I Started a Joke” in *Æconomics* 6, “I Started a Joke,” available at: <http://www.philipmcshane.org/ecconomics>.

⁵¹ Two areas were found to be delicate at the Florida Conference: issues concerning proving the existence of God and problems about Lonergan’s discussion of mythic consciousness in *Insight* chapter 17. I reflected on these problems on pages 83–85 of *Lack in the Beingstalk* (Nova Scotia: Axial Publishing, 2006).

⁵² I left Florida with the makings of 6 volumes, but only two appeared, edited by Philip McShane: we ran out of money. The two published volumes are *Foundations of Theology* and *Language, Truth and Meaning*, both published by Gill and Macmillan in the early 1970s.

⁵³ The phrase ends the second paragraph of chapter one of *Method in Theology*. It represents the shabby state of higher level disciplines that resulted from Aristotle’s “bolder spirit” view with which the paragraph begins.

⁵⁴ This is a large present axial crisis. Recall note 5 of CWL 3, *Insight* 567: “An accurate statement on initial meanings would be much more complex.” Indeed, it will require a decent beginning of the positive Anthropocene, a finding of selves ontically and phyletically in self-luminosity, lifting us all out of present *haute vulgarization* (see *Philosophical and Theological Papers: 1958–1964*, vol. 6, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Robert Croken, Frederick Crowe, and Robert Doran [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996] 121 and 155) to a positive global spooky grip on layers of human talk. But key to that is a Tower-of-

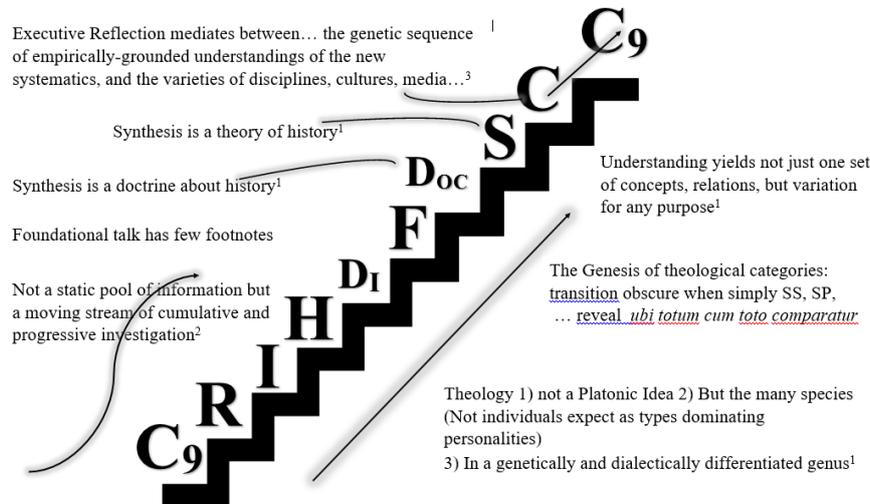
stiles was already out, of course, but apart from Rahner and myself, it failed to catch anyone's attention.⁵⁵ There was attention to *Insight*, but I see that attention now as a thorough overreach of erudite common sense. That, indeed, is the central topic of my little red book, *The Future*, and the focus on that final note quoted above in note 16.

And there is another daft note that I should surely quote annoyingly and amusingly. It is the previous note in that final piece of the book, note 50. The note is to a comment in my text about "the stair of my stare," the stair in question that surely I must put in here, me staring you thus in the face: I place it after the "call out" footnote.

My stare at you is incomplete, and the final note will put that incompleteness in context. But here I think of the short-term context, the context of my brief introduction (above, p. 28) of Aristotle and Drucker as pointing to the stairs inadequately, (R, I, H and D_{oc}, S, C) and my pointing inadequately there to the bridge between them (D_i, F): a context for the *Duffy Exercise* that is to dance round the third chapter of this book. The short-term fuller context to my "Openers of the positive Anthropocene" in the book is your picking up on my nudgings given in the repeated mention of problems associated with the words *intersubjectivity* (xiv, xvi, 8, 9, 34–5, 40, 54–5, 80, 92, 96, 103) and *spooky* (3, 8, 13, 17, 66, 116) and the 6 repetitions (xiv, 8, 34, 54, 80, 103) of Lonergan's 1954 challenge regarding the future of theology. You find now, perhaps, that you did not climb in each occurrence to a fresh meaning of the word or the challenge? Such a climbing in reading belongs to the positive Anthropocene. But we need to climb towards that climbing: try climbing over the stile named by my repetitions, my petitions, Lonergan's petition. I return to your aid in "On the Stile of a Crucial Experiment," *Divyadaan: Journal of Philosophy and Education*, vol. 31 (2020).

Able grip on explanatory meaning: that is the central cultural conversion needed to end axial times. That shift is blocked at present by endless learned discourse about initial and shaky meanings of other varieties of conversion and distinctions that are to be shifted into explanatory effectiveness in a later stage of meaning. Add the pointing of note 64.

⁵⁵ Lonergan's revolutionary shift appeared in "Functional Specialization," *Gregorianum* 50 (1969) 485–505. Rahner, who somehow strayed on his way to Florida for the conference, put his reflections on functional specialization in "Kritische Bemerkungen zu B. J. F. Lonergan's Aufsatz: 'Functional Specialties in Theology,'" *Gregorianum* 51/3 (1970) 537–540. My own effort, regarding the application of the dynamic analysis to musicology, became chapter two of my mid-1970's book, *The Shaping of the Foundations*.



I must, however, return to your aid in a spooky intersubjective fashion. But what could I possibly mean by “spooky” and “intersubjective” here? In both cases I send you back, or freshly forward, to read Lonergan.

“Spooky”? “Contemporary English usage commonly associates the supernatural with the spooky. But the term has a far older meaning, to which we have already adverted in speaking of vertical finality.”⁵⁶ But what is this verticality that lifts the air we breathe into the breadth of God? What is this mission of molecules that gibes and gyres and guests and guides into Gifts?⁵⁷

“Intersubjective”? “Intersubjectivity”? Sniff the full context of its spooky meaning from a letter Lonergan wrote to Fred Crowe in June of 1954.

The Method of Theology is coming into perspective. For the Trinity: Imago Dei in homine and proceed to the limit as in evaluating $[1 + 1/n]^n$ as n approaches infinity. For the rest: ordo universi. From the viewpoint of

⁵⁶ Lonergan, “Mission and the Spirit,” in *A Third Collection*, ed. F. E. Crowe (New York: Paulist Press, 1985) 25.

⁵⁷ This is a powerful W-enzyme nudge for higher reachings of the weave of the Interior Lighthouse. It is the challenge of CWL 3, *Insight* 722, with five poises of repentance on the page calling you out, or in, towards the molecular “order’s dynamic joy and zeal.” (the final words on that page)

theology, it is a manifold of unities developing in relation to one another and in relation to God, *i.e.*, metaphysics as I conceive it but plus transcendent knowledge. From the viewpoint of religious experience, it is the same relations as lived in a development from elementary intersubjectivity (cf. Sullivan's basic concept of interpersonal relations) to intersubjectivity in Christ (cf. the endless Pauline [suv- or] sun- compounds) on the sensitive (external Church, sacraments, sacrifice, liturgy) and intellectual levels (faith, hope, charity).
Religious experience : Theology : Dogma :: Potency : Form : Act.

My stare and my stair, my note and Lonergan's note to Crowe are, yes indeed, call-outs to cowboys and cowgirls, faint shadow-calls of the "Roun Doll, Home James" that titles my ten-volume *Cantower* series.⁵⁸ But the stairs and notes are Dionysian weaves round distant terminal values,⁵⁹ and what is important here, to you and me, is effectively staring in the face a simple proximate possibility in its seeding and seething patterns of probability. So I return to your aid, or rather try to turn you to your own aid, by pointing you⁶⁰ to the brilliant piece of Lonergan's "technique that objectifies subjective differences"⁶¹ that was echoed in the paragraph above, a paragraph that was unsuccessfully addressed to a broad audience. The brilliant piece, alas, was unsuccessfully addressed to those who were and are apparently interested in his work. Count them: a half century of them, each generation sitting on the stile; corralled; O.K.ed; "big frogs in little ponds,"⁶² misdirecting classroom supermolecules.

There is, then, my simple calling out, which is just a repeat of Lonergan's: this is the technique of discomfiting intersubjectivity that is capable of "providing a statistically effective form for the next cycle of

⁵⁸ The *Cantower* series emerged from the inspiration of a reading of Pound's *Cantos*. Only after 30 *Cantowers* did the suggested title emerge from musing over James Joyce's chant in *Ulysses*, "Deshil Alles Eamus."

⁵⁹ This relates to a complex and suggestive reading of Lonergan's spread of words on page 48 in chapter 2 of *Method in Theology* (CWL 14, 47), reaching back to his reflections on "the Human Good" in CWL 10, *Topics in Education* 40. The third line of the spread of words is open to a Dionysian itch of creative leaping.

⁶⁰ I refrain from quoting those lines that I named *Lonergan's 1833 Overture*. They await your eyes and ayes in *Method in Theology* 250, lines 18–33; CWL 14, 234, lines 14–27.

⁶¹ Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 235; CWL 14, 221.

⁶² A remark of Lonergan in 1961 while visiting Dublin, Ireland about the state of theology after being walled off by Trent.

human action.”⁶³ There is my broader calling out: I challenge you to check—that word in its many senses—your biased corralled stile-sitting against serious understanding.⁶⁴ Both my simple call and my broader call-out is to global humanity and not just to Lonergan students, but I have sung out that joke abundantly already. The call-out is made neatly possible by James Duffy, in his *Duffy Exercise* plan.⁶⁵ Of course, I am here if you wish to call me out, but please don’t do it from your old stile or in any present style of dialectic: come at me, guns blazing, “in the style of the crucial experiment” that is Lonergan’s road to the positive Anthropocene.

ABSTRACT

The essay is an invitation to an encounter, one described by Lonergan in *Method in Theology* chapter 10 as “an objectification of subjectivity in the style of the crucial experiment” (CWL 14, 237). In that chapter he describes a specific procedure for identifying horizons, indicating resulting views, and bringing differences out into the open. McShane invites us, the readers, to step off our merely academic stiles—a set of usually two steps that you climb over to cross a wall or fence—near a university, church, synagogue, or mosque, and to expand on what we consider authentic in the “very, very delicate area of value judgments.”

⁶³ Lonergan, *Essay in Fundamental Sociology* 20.

⁶⁴ The deep central crisis in the study of Lonergan is reading about general bias in *Insight* chapter 7, “sitting on the stile” of “*haute vulgarization*” (CWL 6, 121 and 155) in an old style of correlationally-rich initial meanings. Recall note 54 above. The problem is to take the first eight chapters of *Insight* seriously, as steps of the Interior Lighthouse, and to be critical of sitting on the stile, writing in the style, of epistemological sophistications.

⁶⁵ I point to an exercise you might join in attempting, an exercise in the *Lonergan 1833 Overture* called the *Duffy Exercise*, the fruits of which, if you wish, would appear in the *Journal of Macrodynamical Analysis*. For more information on that, check with James Duffy humanistasmorelia@gmail.com.