

A Fresh Beginning

It seems best to start this series where it actually started: at the final footnote of the book, [Interpretation from A to Z](#), footnote 119 on page 208. After its presentation—and your reading—we can begin our musing about the failures of the spring of 2020 and what is to be done about them. So here you have that footnote which is to the word “field” in the final sentence: “field the seeds of an aesthetic new global politics and economics in this millennium, starting in this decade with you.”

See CWL 18, *Phenomenology and Logic*, index under *Field*. “The field is the universe, but my horizon defines my universe” (*Ibid.*, 199). The challenge of the jump? “They have to be people in whom the horizon is coincident with the field. If they are not, then all they can possibly do is increase the confusion and accelerate the doom” (*Ibid.*, 306). “We are in a situation where the people who can do the most harm are doing it and the people who could do the most good are not” (*Ibid.*, 307). We are in a situation that invites us all, yes all Lonergan folk, to turn for at least a decade or three into forward specialists, mainly indeed into the last specialty and its C₉ pusher-ons: 2020–2050 needs to be the age of a discontinuity in the genesis of street-smarts. Recall my 21 nudges that ended with note 103 above. Recall note 108 and Lonergan’s appeal of $\frac{3}{4}$ of a century ago. I have much on my mind regarding the way forward, not least the problem of sublating *The Interior Castle*, adequately identified, into *The Interior Lighthouse*. But I refrain from writing further: this seems a decent end-book of a long run. It seems best to venture on a new website series, *Questing2020*, question and tentative answers about these next decades. That series will, I hope, be only the tip of the iceberg of *Assembly* that cools the business of present Lonergan studies in favor of a search for fertile seeds of a global effectiveness. But also I think of the Quest series as just a public tip of the bergamot of private communications with me about that task: a herbing of hearts towards Dionysian drives in these next generations. My e-mail is pmcshane@shaw.ca

Such was my spring 2020 invitation and challenge. I was not optimistic about it causing a stir among the ‘Lonergan’ community: there was no flurry of either condemnation or consultation. But I do know that I am not alone, and that a small group has begun a supporting disturbance of the settled dodging of Lonergan’s invitation by pushing forward his key strategy of *Assembly* etc. in a series of volumes of the *Journal of Macrodynamical Analysis*. Will we manage to hit the stale on the head in this next decade? The issue is the stalking of Jesus in history.¹ Will the settled sincere putterers round the beginnings of that

¹ Chapter Y of [Interpretation from A to Z](#), “Stalking Jesus,” treats of the strange variety of meanings of *stalking* and *stalk*.

stalk of His Symphony continue to balk at the stalk, and at my talk of the effective engineering poise it involves?

So, on we go into the distant future, the Assemblers of the [Journal of Macrodynamic Analysis](#) and my series *Questing2020* as it was described in that footnote 119. My hope still is that my e-mail address will encourage correspondence: questions, criticisms, suggestions, whatever. They can be built into the series, but with the provision that if a questioner wishes to remain anonymous, that is fine. Think for instance, of a keen student, trapped in old conventions of class-work or thesis writing. Such a student had best stay anonymous in asking advice about playing the game, “getting the union card,” as Lonergan nudged me to do in 1968 re successfully surviving Oxford. But those who consider my work deeply or shallowly flawed should surely come out in the open? Well, we’ll see.

It seemed strategically wise to add a further context to the intended series of questioning exchanges, so I do that in the first seven of these essays, running alphabetically from A to G. For one thing, this gives time to stir up fresh and refreshing interest in Lonergan’s project. The other aspect is that I wish to create a mood of fantasy and imaging that would help us into that freshness. Obviously, then, you can join in with questions and suggestions and flow forward as participant from *Questing 2020H* on, without a reading of the first seven essays. But I would hope that increasing the need to share context, to share eventually what I call a *standard model*, would nudge you to putter round in the strange context I bring to these exchanges.

So, on I go now with this first essay on the zone of contemplation. What is my general drive? Let me be extravagant and eccentric about the objective, as I place it in a question. “How are we to speak effectively and engineeringly of articulated contemplation?” The question can be posed more familiarly by a question about a sub-zone of the task: “How are we to sublimate into the new context Bernard McGinn’s four volumes titled *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism*?”²

Such a sublimation is a massive communal task for the next generations, grounding an eventual dazzling lift of various poises of prayer and worship. But we are not going there: we shall slide along modestly, each perhaps in their own zone, be it Ignatian or Buddhist or whatever. No need then, to rush to McGinn, or indeed to go find the little book that I use for a beginning of our venture: Peter Tyler, *Teresa of Avila. Doctor of the Soul*.³ No need to

² Bernard McGinn’s work was part of the background of my five essays on the website, [Prehumous 4–8](#), on “Foundational Prayer,” written round All Saint’s Day of November 2007. I was then only in my 76th year. On the relation of these essays to the present refined reach, see the beginning of *Questing2020E*, “Tyler and the Existential Gap.”

³ Bloomsbury, 2013. In a sense, an accident acquisition, wandering in Catholic bookstore. I was in Dublin at the time, writing [The Allure of the Compelling Genius of History](#), where there occurs some reflections on Teresa of Avila (See pp. 50, 58, 125).

have it: I shall be giving sufficient quotations and sketches in *Questing2020E* to bring out its relevance.

Tyler's work becomes my explicit focused interest in that fifth essay: the three essays between set a mood, I hope, through the presentation of a loose context of imagings that help to poise us in hopefilled fantasy. Finally, I would note oddities in my meaning of focused interest. The focus is open and forward, and this is true of these seven essays as a beginning. Essay F, for instance, opens up the problem of lifting Lonergan's Latin works into an effective self-appreciative explanatory and contemplative context. Indeed, the same can be said of Tyler's pointings regarding Teresa of Avila. There you have two large projects that I bring myself and you towards: might we follow up on them, and on others that I touch on in these seven essays, and on and on with and within other seething and seeding problems that are to emerge? That depends on how these essays and the concurrent discussions on [Dialectic Exercises](#) and journal experiments catch the attention of your discontent with present intellectual muddlings "at a rather critical moment in the historical process."⁴

⁴ CWL 18, *Phenomenology and Logic*, 300.