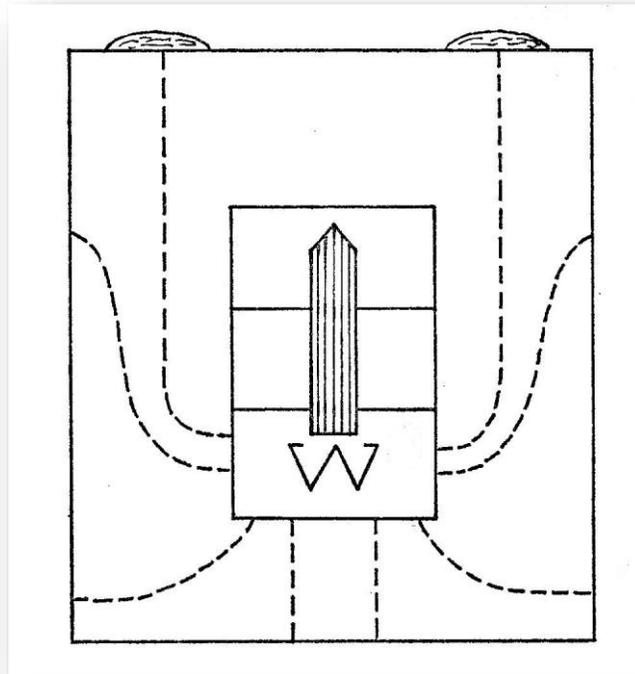


MOVING TO THE SELF-CONTROL OF DISPUTING QUESTS



My hope here is that we may effectively find a way forward out of such disputes as I have been illustrating recently. I have paused over the present dispute, over 45 pages from Danny Monsour¹ taking to task Jeremy Wilkins² 36-page critique of Doran’s stand,³ our topic in the previous essay. But was it our topic? Or rather, were we not getting used to a transition to talking in terms of **mibox** and your mibox?⁴

¹ H. Daniel Monsour, “Some Reflections on Professor Wilkin’s Paper, ‘Method and Metaphysics in Theology: Doran and Lonergan,’” *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies*, n.s. **6**, no. **1** (2015), 17–62.

Hereafter *Monsour*.

² Jeremy D. Wilkins paper is in *Method* n.s. **5**, no. **2** (2014) 53–85.

³ The Doran Essay I refer now is his most recent article “Generalized Isomorphism. The Key to Transposition,” *Dinyadaan* **28**/2 (2017), 43–64.

⁴ Boldface is used thus, **mibox**, when you or I talk about our own perspective. **Mibox** talk is talk about mybox. The *1833 Overture* is a challenge to all dialecticians to layer into sensibility the invisibles of **mibox**.

The transition is by way of the transition recommended by Lonergan, the transition I named the *1833 Overture*. Even if it was not part of his fuller plan of a global collaboration, it is quite a neat scheme, recurrence scheme. Let's just think of it in that simpler way for the moment.

In fact I spent the morning musing over how to keep our searching simple, following my brooding over Danny Monsour's very detailed effort. I want these next essays to carry us, as simply as possible, to the new control of meaning promised by Lonergan. Frankly, then, my reading of Monsour's work led me to muse about how to use it to help us positively along. Should I even pause over that work now: perhaps yes, to give you a taste of the drive of the work as opposed to the drive of my work and Lonergan's? Yes, there's a naughty claim there: **mibox** is Lonergan's mibox, indeed the piece of his mibox that he climbed to in section 3 of chapter 17 of *Insight*, which haunts his frustrated adventures of *Method in Theology*. So let me get into that straight away, with jump-off from Mansour, indeed from his talk of *scaffolding*. He is led to use that word by Lonergan: I quote the relevant text below.⁵ So let's start from a paragraph-claim of Mansour.

Now if the worlds of common sense and theory and their languages provide the "scaffolding" for entering the world of interiority, once one has entered and gained at least some proficiency in operating in that world, it seems entirely likely that attainments in the worlds of common sense and theory can continue to provide "scaffolding," contributing to one's attempts to build up further that world of interiority. Thus, it seems understandable how the metaphysical formulations of scholastic theology or, more narrowly, the formulations of Lonergan's scholastic theology could continue to function as providing "scaffolding," contributing to one's continual attempts in methodical theology to build up terms and relations or categories that are systematically related and have, in one way or another, a conscious basis within the world of religious interiority.⁶

This is a central issue that underpins the debate between Doran and Wilkins. I want to jump off from it, and away from it, in a creative way. We have already provided an elementary

⁵ "As the world of common sense and its language provide the scaffolding for entering into the world of theory, so both the worlds of common sense and of theory and their languages provide the scaffolding for entering into the world of interiority" (*Method in Theology*, 259).

⁶ *Monsour*, 35–36.

scaffolding that rescues the old scholastic philosophy and theology: it lurks there in the diagram that begins this essay. The three-layer box within the big “eye”-box gives a neat diagramming of Lonergan’s rescuing of potency, form, act within the surrealism of his critical realism. In the previous essay I talked about the middle box of that three, a midbox, neatly renamed a mibox. Each of us has a mibox, a whatview, a *Weltanschauung* which is a *Praxisweltanschauung*.⁷ I talked about the content of **mibox** purposefully identifying contained structures and isomorphism, many of them shared with Lonergan.⁸ It is now centrally important for me to draw your attention to one of those shared structures, and even to recall for you my leap into luminosity regarding that structuring of mathematical theory as “providing the scaffolding for entering into the world of interiority.”⁹

I recall, then, being in the Regis College Lonergan center in the early 1980s, still puzzling about the heuristic structure of the systematics that was to be the seventh specialty. I came across, for the first time *De Intellectu et Methodo*, and was startled by the potential of the following passage, given here in translation:

The history of any particular discipline is in fact the history of its development. But this development, which would be a theme of history, is not something simple and straightforward but something which occurs in a long series of various steps, errors, detours, and corrections. Now as one studies this movement he learns about this developmental process and so now possesses within himself an instance of that development which took place perhaps over several centuries. This can happen only if the person understands both his subject and the way he learned about it. Only then will he understand which elements in the historical developmental process had to be understood before the others, which one mad for progress in understanding and which held back, which elements really belonged to the particular science and which did not, and which elements contained errors. Only then will he be able to tell at what point in the history of his subject there emerged new visions of the whole and when the first true system occurred, and when the transition took place from an earlier to a later

⁷ The shift to *Praxis* is an identification of The Tower of Able as leaning, “in the style of Burckhardt rather than Ranke” (*Method*, 250). It relates to the deeper meaning of *what*: “being intelligent includes a grasp of hitherto unnoticed or unrealized possibilities.” (*ibid.*, 53)

⁸ An issue that is to emerge in this century is the communal sharing of Lonergan’s scientific poise. See Pierrot Lambert and Philip McShane, *Bernard Lonergan: His Life and Leading Ideas*, “The Dominant Context of Lonergan’s Life,” 166–193.

⁹ See note 6 above.

systematic ordering, which systematization was simply an expansion of the former and which was radically new; what progressive transformation the whole subject underwent; how everything that was explained by the old systematization is now explained by the new, along with many other things that the old one did not explain – the advances in physics, for example, by Einstein and Max Planck. Then and then alone will he be able to understand to understand what factors favoured progress, what hindered it, and why, and so forth.

Clearly, therefore, the historian of any discipline has to have a thorough knowledge and understanding of whole subject. And it is not enough that he understand it in any way at all, but he must have a systematic understanding of it. For the precept, when applied to history, means that successive systems which have developed over a period of time have to be understood. The systematic understanding of a development ought to make use of an analogy with the development that takes place in the mind of the investigator who learns the subject, and this interior development within the mind of the investigator ought to parallel the historical process by which the science itself developed.¹⁰

I had thus been invited to envisage, in my own field of study, the flowering of its story. The word *flowering* is used very deliberately, paralleling the story with the growth of a flower. A fuller view was later to emerge.¹¹ But let us stick with the flower–image and ask, what does this lift of understanding and image do to the scaffolding problem raised by Doran and Monsour, to the problem of linking the long run of scholastic work with the run that is to begin in a new theology that is grounded in interiority? Should I leave you with the puzzle, strangely parallel to the simple crossword puzzle of getting a four-letter word out of the clue, “round the end of a season”? If you are a careless reader, you’ll pause over neither clue.

LOL: were you caught there, a lazy **what** in your mibox? And this little light of mine in **mibox** tempts me to let it be so, leaving you, on and in that topic, lacking further sources of sparking in your mibox till we finish our trip with Mansour, gathering, thus, branches for the mibox blaze.

¹⁰ Lonergan, “*Understanding and Method*,” CWL 23, *Early Works on Theological Method*, 175–77.

¹¹ You might think of it as placing the flower in the field. “The field is *the* universe, but my horizon defines *my* universe.” CWL 18, *Phenomenology and Logic*, 199.

Let us pause and recall where we are: gathered round a dialectic table, working our way uncomfortably through three objectifications, miboxes and even perhaps *moi intimes* on show, being rattled forward, so that “positions are developed and counterpositions are reversed” with some decent statistics of long-term success. In the present case of fragmented, amateur, and incomplete performance, what is “regarded as materials”¹² by me here, and “assembled, completed,”¹³ etc., in foggy fashion, are statements of Danny Monsour in his 45 pages. I am detecting poises that I would like to have had better chat from him, e.g., “indicating the view that would result from developing what he has regard as positions and by reversing what he has regarded as counter-positions.”¹⁴

Here is where I take an optimistic turn, a turn you might intussuscept slowly into your mibox. I turn away from details, in a turn that I have been nudged towards in these days and weeks, thinking of the reality of you reading and I writing, and of Trump and North Korea and Russia waving bombs at each other as we pass through Easter, and the possibility of the details of this debate among elders pressuring me so that, I get into thinking like Lonergan: “I was led to write the book and not because I had nothing better to do.”¹⁵ I have something better to do than let the details of Monsour’s work lead you and me into book-length ramblings.¹⁶ So I would ask you and me to pause over Lonergan’s cunning challenge to each

¹² *Method in Theology*, 250, lines 29–30.

¹³ *Ibid.*, line 30.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, lines 26–28.

¹⁵ *CWL 7, The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, 3. There is an interesting note to the text there about the failure of his venture that spring of 1956. Will my venture here have any effect on the June Gathering in Boston this year of 2017?

¹⁶ But now, unlike Lonergan, I have in mind and in method the something better to do. It is laid out there on page 250: there is to be added to the *Assembly* that includes Danny’s paper the processes of *Completion*, *Comparison*, etc., right down through the three objectifications. These processes remain obscure till they are tried. When done reasonably well they cut back on distracting details. But how am I to intimate that a little here, prior to my fuller venture in *Disputing Quests* 18? *Comparison* is the real testing, but it involves a grip on the deep genetic cyclic control of meaning that crowned Lonergan’s work. Still, without getting to grips with that, you have an entry point into the central flaw of Monsour’s poise if you take some enlightened note of his poise, reaching for a nudging glimpse of his mibox. He continually (18, 29, 30, 34, 40, 46, 54, 57, 59, 62) goes back to the thin suggesting of Lonergan’s major-minor premise stuff of *Insight* 424–25. One asks, then, whether he has in mind the place of the two sets of canons in that logic, soaking up into the major premise the subtle genetic expansions of the primary minor premises, and cycling into the very strange genetic axiomatics the swing of implementations fermenting around the secondary minor premises. I think

of us to indicate “the view that would develop” in theology’s miboxes and commonsense miboxes if our respective poises were effective. That cunning challenge of Lonergan was one that haunted him for the thirty years of his climb to writing *Method*, knowing that, e.g., his logic of *Insight* did not cut it, did not match up to his hope of 1936 about Isaiah’s dream. So I recall my discomfoting question, aired many times in this past decade without too many elderly takers. It heads chapter 8, “The 8-Fold Cyclic Way Folds Other Ways,” of my little book *The Everlasting Joy of Being Human*, placed there in boldfaced print, repeated thus here. Perhaps a fresh paragraph is called for, an Easter Chant, a Leonard Cohen Alleluia, a memorial of Lonergan’s dream as he ended his “Essay in Fundamental Sociology” 80 years ago? “Is Isaiah’s dream to be taken literally or is it figure? It would be fair and fine, indeed, to think it no figure.”

So: do you say “Yes” to the address of Lonergan?

Do you view humanity as possibly maturing—in some serious way—or just messing around between good and evil, whatever you think they are?

I end, thus, my 17th essay on “Disputing Quests” on Easter Monday, thinking of the deepest of revolutions,¹⁷ wondering whether Mansour or Doran or Byrne or Vertin or any other of the elders or youngers will take my stand seriously, will come round to speaking at this shabby initial dialectic table?

I am not finished of course, with my **mibox** exposure: the 18th *Disputing Quest* will find me whirling joyfully round “the view that would result . . .”¹⁸ McShane is, in his final offensive rebelliousness, “at pains not to conceal his tracks.”¹⁹ I have been tracking since 1952,²⁰ and

this world of interiorized science is unknown to Monsour, and the dynamics of the *1833 Overture* is geared to bring awkwardly into the light, with increasing cyclic refinement, such unknowing. It becomes radically discomfoting when identified with the inability to solve the problem posed by Lonergan in *Insight* 763–4, about the Mystical Body, pilgrim and eschatological. But that is stuff for *Divided Quests* 18.

¹⁷ See note 21 below.

¹⁸ *Method in Theology*, 250, line 26.

¹⁹ *Method in Theology*, 193.

²⁰ Indeed, the tracking began earlier, but perhaps one interesting struggle of 1953 is worth mentioning, the struggle with “diagonalization” brooded over in *Wealth of Self*, 24–26. The display on the top of page 26 represents my battle against inverse insight. Later I spent two summers struggling with Gödel. Lonergan and I shared that struggle on one of our last conversations when he asked me about the meaning of the incompleteness theorem. The conversation led me to write the lengthy

more rebellious than I thought at the time of the Florida International Lonergan conference, where I presented two very odd papers. Of the first, Lonergan remarked to me, “Well, it just opens up area after area.” De facto, it opened up nothing. Fifty years after my first climbing effort, in 2002, I decided to track with 117 *Cantowers*—can we not tower Isaiah-style?—to parallel Ezra Pound’s madness. Perhaps I should whirl towards the end of this essay with a quotation from the first of those essays?

Ezra Pound asserted that the first job of the critic was to present his ‘ideography of the good.’²¹ Now it would be quite foolish of me to expect many of my readers to see what I am pushing for with this ideograph, this central character-eye-sing of the lifting of the *id* of history towards some luminosity of the mystical organism.²²

(about 66 pages) chapter 1, “Gödel’s Incompleteness Theorem” of the [*Lonergan’s Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry*](#), a book in which I challenge both Roger Penrose and Robert Doran.

²¹ *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, edited with an introduction by T.S. Eliot, New Directions, Norfolk, 1968, 37. Of interest, perhaps, is the source of Pound’s focus e.g. his dependence on Fenollosa essay, “The Chinese Written Character as a Medium of Poetry,” viewed by Pound in 1915 as a “whole basis of aesthetics.” References to these works and to other relevant discussion of the topic are available in Ronald Bush, *The Genesis of Ezra Pound’s Cantos*, Princeton University Press, 1976; my immediate reference is to page 10. See also Peter Mankin, *Pound’s Cantos*, especially the first four chapters on “The Beginning,” “Preparation,” “Ur-Cantos,” and “Structures.” On Pound criticism in the last century see Mankin, 310–16. I must note here that I am not setting up Pound as some front-runner in the search for the “tale of the tribe.” I happen to find the Canto notion suggestive, tied in with Lewis’ notion of vorticism and Upward’s image of ‘whirl-swirl’ (Bush, 92–3), and Pound’s interest in economic reality. And the image of his long struggle echoes with my own. “For forty years I have schooled myself to write an epic poem” (Ezra Pound, *Selected Prose*, 1909-1965, ed. William Cookson, New York, New Directions, 1875, 167). Some other image may suit you in sharing or criticising my monthly flight of fantasy, your daily climb, the human tidings. We desperately need post-Dantesque imagery, “To make a church / or an altar to Zagreus.../ Without jealousy/ like the double arch of a window/ or some great colonnade.” (“Notes for Canto CXVII et seq.,” that concludes Pound’s efforts). My imaging of molecular spirit’s Cantower and Whirlwind (see the Bacchuspage at the end of my *Lack in the Beingstalk*) is simply one searching beyond Constantian and Dantesque layerings.

²² *Cantower* 1, “Function and History,” page 8. The quotation is from the end part of the first section, “Remembering the Future,” and the first footnote recall’s Eric Voegelin’s beginning of his last volume *In Search of Order*. “Where does the Beginning Begin? As I am putting down these words on an empty page I have begun to write a sentence that, when it is finished, will be the beginning of a chapter on certain problems of beginning.” (vol. 5, p. 13) I note that the date of my essay was multiply symbolic “Easter Monday, April 1st, 2002.” It was the first of 158 monthly essays, starting on the day of the 1916 Irish Rebellion. I have left in the long footnote from the original text of 2002. I too write a sentence now, but the sentence is my answer to the question that I posed on April 2nd of this year, as a title for *Disputing Quests* 15, “Is Lonerganism Fiddling while Home Burns?” My answer is a firm “Yes.”