

## **Futurology: From “Isms” to “A Cajoled Generous Engineering”**

Before I spread my remembering of the future more broadly, let me give what seems to me a helpful and relevant take on my odd title-twisting. That take reaches back to conversations with Bernard Lonergan in a suburb of Toronto Canada in the summer of 1966. It reaches back, obviously, in and out of my present poise, and I symbolize that poise by the not-too-complex diagrams I add below, on the second page here. The piece of the conversation that has stayed with me as an unanswered question all these 53 years, is Lonergan’s question as he paced his little upper room in a College called *Regis*, “What am I to do?” The addendum to his question was “I can’t put all of *Insight* into the first chapter of *Method*.” But I must add to that pacing his quiet poise, in an earlier conversation of that summer, when we faced each other, both seated, he pointed the four fingers of each his hands towards each other, beginning a ten minute oration—bright eyes hovering round his already-out-there-between-us fingers—with the words: “Well it’s easy. You just double the structure.”

I spent hours of that summer pacing the local fields trying to fantasize heave-on wards neuromolecularly towards the anamnesis and prolepsis lurking in the molecules of his bright eyes: rather than effectively sharing his puzzle re guarding his communication. I had no decent answer to his lebensraum’s paced questioning at the minute nor in those months. Indeed, I was still innocently fresh and eager about the communications problem when, four and a half years later, the same question hovered over my shabby indexing effort of his book, and I still remember vividly my delight in finding pages 286–7 of the galleys.

In the decades since I have come up with a range of answers I might have given Lonergan in that 1966 summer, but that range would distract us: except perhaps for sharing what may seem one quite daft one: “Well, Bernie, don’t write the book at all!”

Fly in fantasy over the book he did write in a flight from the decent pointing—better if media-gestured contemporarily than old printsawed—of chapter one’s first paragraph and chapter 14’s last paragraph. In between, fantasy flushed, what gives? This millennium craves for the theatre of the absorbed in a seeming too loose new trek of a Cajoled Generous Engineering. Lonergan’s Little Read Book would be there, and Mao’s words would be vortexed up.

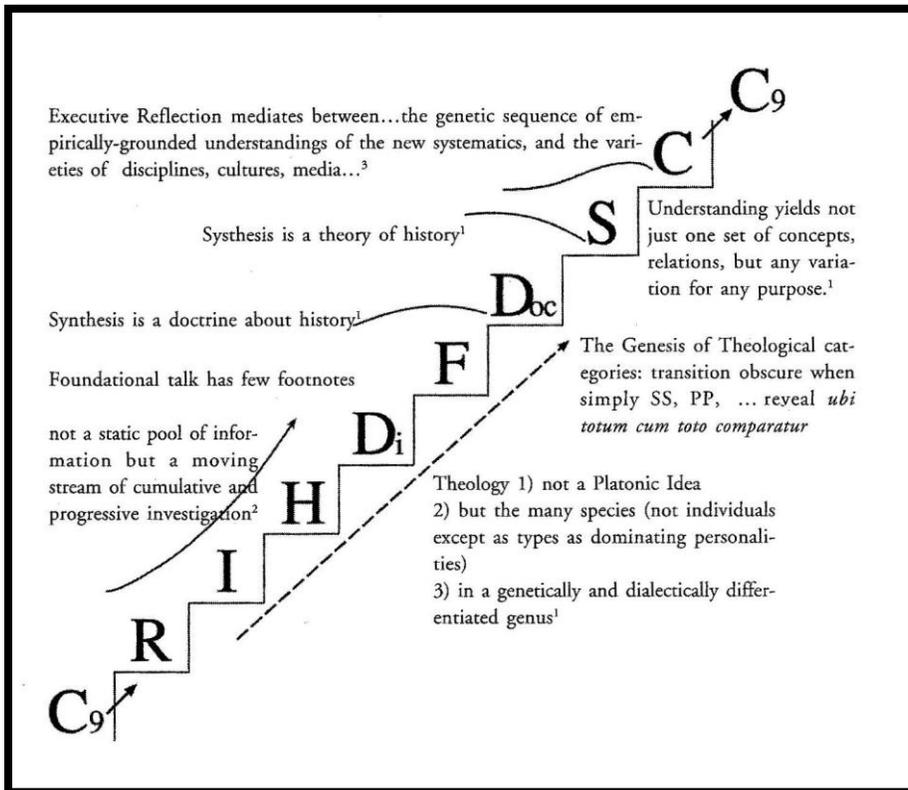
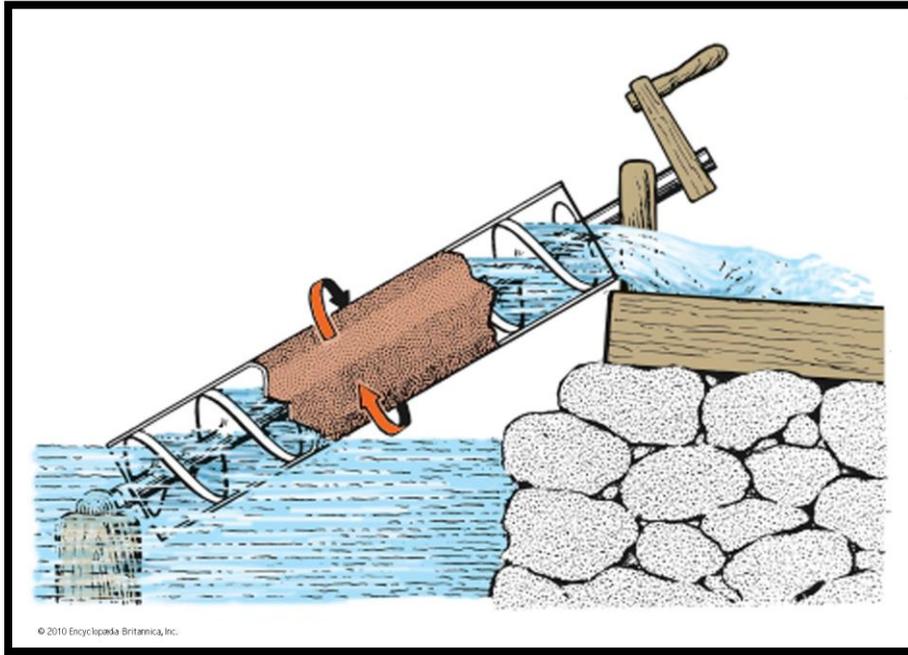
The cock has crowed and all beneath the sky is bright,  
Music rises from Khotan and a thousand places  
To fill the poet with unparagoned inspiration.<sup>1</sup>

To fill our global story.

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Jerome Ch-en, *Mao and the Chinese Revolution*, Oxford University Press, 1965, 344.

Diagrams of screwing [a] water and [b] culture



The second diagram I leave in the fullness I gave it in its initial 1989 creation.<sup>2</sup> There are three referencing notes in the text, and I package them for convenience in the single note below.<sup>3</sup> But the intent of my effort here is to point to a stripping of the referencing to either theology or general metaphysics: the issue is not Plato's cave but Pollution's slaves. My suggested direction of solution is nuanced and open, to emerge only in its up-taking, up-screwing.<sup>4</sup>

An April fool's day message this. Recall [Economics 6](#), "cauling in the middle kingdom of pilgrim daze." Have I started another joke? In it I certainly should not "spread my remembering of the future more broadly" as I mentioned at the beginning: unless the mention is in a fresh cultural mesh. Yet notice the word "before" at the very start. Might we not have a freshly-meshed joking start in weaving words round a *happening*, an X-factor, where X is a well, you know.<sup>5</sup> I think now of my first "Remembering the Future": would you believe that it is dated "Easter Monday, April 1<sup>st</sup> 2002"? It was the start of [Cantower 1](#), "Function and History," but I

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<sup>2</sup> The diagram appears on page 189 of *The Allure of the Compelling Genius of History* (Axial Publishing, 2015). It originally appeared in the 1989–90 book, [Process. Introducing Themselves to Young \(Christian\) Minders](#), in chapter 4.

<sup>3</sup> [1. Bernard Lonergan, from unpublished notes of the early 1960s available in the Toronto center, originally classified by me as Batch B, 8, 6, V.] [2. Bernard Lonergan, "Christology Today: Methodological Reflections," *A Third Collection*, Ed. Frederick E. Crowe S.J., Paulist Press, 1985, 82.] [3. Philip McShane, "Systematics, Communications, Actual Contexts," *Lonergan Workshop, vol. 6*, ed. Frederick Lawrence, Scholars Press, 1986, 151.]

<sup>4</sup> Think, first, of Lonergan's notion of writing *Insight* (p.754): naïve, one may now think, but NOW? Think of the problem of Christian philosophy, not by any means an elementary one. Think of the problem of active and effective convergence of religions that is the topic of *Divyadaan* vol. 30, no. 1 (2019). Brood over the next note, weaving someway from Lonergan's symbolized view of 1954 to my outreach symbolism of 2018, a climb lurking in my title of 2018 in *Journal of Macrodynamical Analysis*: "[Method in Theology: From \[1 + 1/n\]<sup>nx</sup> to {M\(W<sub>3</sub>\)<sup>θPT</sup>}](#)"<sup>4</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The "well, you know" has the comic turn of a naming of cosmopolis, "in the first instance an X" (*Insight*, 263). It occurs near the end of that brutal axial identifier, *Insight* chapter 7, and introduces its intellectual brutes (*CWL* 6, 121, 155) to the X of serious science, to be read properly—or misread improperly?!—by None. I suggest that, if and when, you "double the structure" in the manner suggested by the conclusion of this essay, you focus the sharing, both scientific and streetwise, on the manageable global image of geohistorical collaboration pointed to by M(W<sub>3</sub>)<sup>θPT</sup>. But, to be an adequate "handballer," "globetrotter," you need to struggle to be at home in and on the dynamic mapping of the villages of town and gown, bent thus neurodynamically to a futurology of "the emergence, the longer or shorter period of utility, and the disappearance, disintegration, or waste of an aggregate of meals, clothes, houses, farms, mines, markets, ships, cities, factories, utilities, services, amusements, schools, courts, parliaments, hospitals, churches" (*For a New Political Economy*, *CWL* 21, 13). Think of all this, and its heuristics of a plethora of situation rooms, in the dawning view that weaves engineering into generosity, thus voiding an "innocent first step." "A fundamental defect lies in the innocent first step of the solution, in which those who are willing to contribute for little or no return are brushed aside, to make the exchange system an exclusive club for business men" (*For a New Political Economy*, 35). The generosity is to include thus a raggedy band of other "mitigating" (*ibid.*, 81) moves, e.g., "the principle of the *level floor* will have to be accepted, developed, and put into effect. One can conceive the various industries as limited areas in the floor of a river: some are out in the center, others near the bank . . . . The principle of the *level floor* would change the river into a canal" (*ibid.*, 93). And central to the "vast task" (*ibid.*, 105) of such a glocal reach is the lightsome secular reaching for a heaven-bent "normative proportion" (*ibid.*, 53–54) pilgrim "standard of living" (*ibid.*, 232) in our ambiguous "habitat" (*Insight*, 498: lines 11, 15).

placed it in the context of the hopeless *happening* of Easter Monday 1916: a small group in Dublin Ireland “challenged an empire that had held colonial sway for almost seven centuries.”<sup>6</sup>

There is and was an evident non-parallel. The empire left most of Ireland five years later. The empire I oppose is, if anything, more deeply entrenched<sup>7</sup> in its guarding of the Little Read Book. “What on earth is to be done?”<sup>8</sup> The story round that question of Lonergan is part of the empire playing providence, solving in its own narrow way the question Lonergan twistedly posed a line later in the letter-being. It needs the detecting of a new screw up that has no sign of emerging from it or any other head of “the monster that has stood forth in our time.”<sup>9</sup>

A little monster, with many headed Catholic relations, stands dark guard over the Little Read Book called *Method* and, yes, the Nonely-Read book called *Insight*. To feed it properly, to give it the refreshment of an arsenic, some rebellious little group has to cajole or force-feed its inattention with the four paradigm components that gesture towards four discomforting Little Read Book pointers in various selective isolations and weaves of, yes, yes, Assembly!<sup>10</sup>

And the real freshening of my remembering of the future leads me to repeat, with all its now diagrammed twists, Lonergan’s pointing, to me and at me and beyond me and with me, of the summer of 1966.

“We’ll its easy: you just double the structure.”

And my meaning, too, is strangely easy, as I repeat to you the end-lines of a Kavanagh poem, *Prelude*.

“You have not got a chance with fraud / And might as well be true to God.”

That same *Prelude* starts with Kavanagh’s nudge to himself.

“Give us another poem he said / Or they will think your muse is dead.”

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<sup>6</sup> I quoted the beginning of section 2, “Strategic Occupations” of [Cantower 1](#).

<sup>7</sup> I like the imaging one gets thinking of that “pacific” trench, covered with kilometers of the dark waters of initial meanings.

<sup>8</sup> I am quoting the end of Lonergan’s letter of January 1935 to his “superior” Fr. Keane, and am tempted to continue it to the end, including my note 10 (The letter is available in Pierrot Lambert and Philip McShane, *Bernard Lonergan. His Life and Leading Ideas*, Axial Publishing, 144–54). But I only add the bit relevant to your reading my text above more accurately. “Briefly, this question is: shall the matter be left to providence to solve according to its own plan; or do you consider that providence intends to use my superiors as conscious agents in the furtherance of what it has already done?”

<sup>9</sup> *Method in Theology*, 40.

<sup>10</sup> I am quite precisely thinking of “[A Paradigmatic Panel for \(Advanced\) Students \(of Religion\)](#)”. The article was rejected by the *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies*, and the rejection contextualized then in my website series [Public Challenging Method Board](#), whose general introduction I add here. “I claimed note 28 of [Tinctures of Systems 6](#) to be my final say. But I cannot in conscience let this opportunity go. I can too easily see Lonerganism drifting on for decades if not for centuries peddling a shabby deceitful version of the genius’s massive discontinuing from and of present God-talk and man-talk and man-walk.” Women, of course, walk too: but more richly. And women-talk, especially beyond male axial warp? “I don’t care what anybody says it’d be much better for the world to be governed by the women in it you wouldn’t see women going and killing one another.” (Molly Bloom, rising to the end of Joyce’s *Ulysses*.)

So here you are.

I had thought of versifying it, but since I am starting an axial joke, a twenty-eight word lining seems best for your mining.

“Double the whole structure in fresh ways of generous secular duplication: weave up and away from general metaphysics and all its stale topics into a general global engineering.”