

*Joistings 12***The Help of Adequate Naming in General Methodology**

What is at issue here is having control of our meaning, whether we are operating at an advanced level or just beginning. The most familiar instance of such control is perhaps the control that the usual diagram of the Periodic Table gives chemists, at whatever level they are working. First school texts in chemistry regularly print that Table within the cover, where it sits saying to the beginner, “this is what you are at”. Later, other images are built on or in: so, for example, one reaches for a grip on subatomic structures or one is given ways to mesh together symbols of organic molecules.

We could go on to illustrate the process of growing control from music, or other arts and sciences. But perhaps it is best to get straight into the problem in our immediate topic of philosophy or metaphysics. We can begin from the title page of *Insight*, where Lonergan quotes Aristotle about insight into image or phantasm. A present beginner might skip over the challenge of the word *image*. What is an image? Well, an image is an image; a dream is a dream; etc. It would be much better if the beginner were tuned into the difficulty of the investigation earlier.¹

This problem of “tuning in” runs extraordinarily deep.² But do we need to somehow plumb these depths in this initial essay? Certainly, we should not skip over them and leap to a possible symbolism of what I might call *tuning control*. And this is all

¹This claim needs thinking out. Is it not, rather, better to lead the beginner gently on? That suggestion raises larger problems of pedagogy and popularization which I meant to deal with in some initial fashion in Cantower 54, “Quantumelectrodynamics, Pedagogy, Popularization” but will now deal with collaboratively as we move along. But my claim stands: it reaches deep into the problem of general bias. I am asking you not to agree with it too easily.

²There is a quite different direction of discussion lurking here that has to do with the remarkable fine-tuning that was nature’s climb to the emergence of components of itself that yet could intussuscept that climb and carry it forward in ecstatic discontinuities.

the more true in that I do not think that I am writing here to beginners. So what is this difficulty and this tuning in? Let us risk two paragraphs of pointing.

There are two areas of Lonergan's writing worth pondering in, into, about, (about)³, here: his reflections on art; his reflections on mystery.³ I would have you hang, dangle, centre, those reflections on a single phrase in Lonergan's writing: "Man by nature is oriented into mystery."⁴

The phrase tests your context, your reading-potential. **Nature**? are you thinking of the drive of 13.7 billion years, of the shocking paradoxical dynamic of the initial primal matter, of the orientations of the emergent infoldings of DNA and dinosaur and dancer? **Orientation**? are you thinking about the molecular loneliness of the groaning cosmos, that is meshed into the exigence that is the heart-reality of each and all of us? And, coming about now to your organic reach, is your thinking within the mesh of that neurochemical loneliness in such a manner as to infold ever-fresher chemical patterns of luminous longing and ecstasy? So we arrive at the significance of art.

Art? Does the previous paragraph not nudge you to a freshening of the meaning of that word? If you are somewhat familiar with Lonergan's scant writings on art and have followed up his trail beyond Suzanne Langer's *Feeling and Form*,⁵ and wove it into Joyce's reflections on a basket,⁶ then you have your lead to a meaning of any artistic deed. But does the lead not become birthingly larger through nature's slow wombing

³Not to worry about (about)³ etc here. It is a first instance of useful symbolism, but perhaps not as yet familiar to you. The main thing is to be led to the two readings I have in mind: the section in *Insight* referred to in the next note, and the ninth chapter of *Topics in Education*.

⁴*Insight*, 546[570].

⁵The book, many times reprinted, came out in 1953. It was added as a footnote, in relation to music, in the proofs of *Insight*, on page 184[208]. See also 544[567].

⁶James Joyce's reflections on the basket in *A Portrait of an Artist* are his commentary on Aquinas' view of art.

within your molecular mind of all objectifiers, objectifieds, gifteds,⁷ an all that is thought (about)³ as molecular in their reach for a basket that is not just a basket?

I risked two paragraphs of pointing. Do you not find them elusive? So do I: their meaning eludes me, as the meaning of small Chopin sounds eludes me still, heard first intoxicatingly more than sixty years ago.

So I return to our previous question: do we need to plumb these depths in this essay? We will not plumb them in eternity. But each of us is called to a maternal cherishing of nine decades or so of the echos of anvil or anthem or ambulance, city lights, country fair. And we are called to the cherishing of that cherishing that is Adequate System, a systematics that is a language of the heart.⁸

Obviously I am interested here in inviting you to a mood of openness regarding “what you are at” when you seek to venture into the strange world named, so dully, *metaphysics* or *methodology*. Recall our first paragraph about chemistry, with its beginners’ nudge of the Periodic Table. It is a taken-for-granted: students may complain, but there is no revolutionary movement towards alchemy. Similarly in music. There are exceptional talents in music that seem to glide through and beyond tables. But a maturing Quincy Jones sat at Nadia Boulanger’s feet, and Burle Ives, at 74, sang scales for two hours each morning.

I am 74 now, and still tuning to the scales of being each morning, still sitting at Lonergan’s feet. And it seems to be of massive cultural importance to intimate the need for and nature of that sitting and singing. Beethoven could speak of his eighth symphony as better than his seventh. Cezanne claimed that at sixty he was making a

⁷I use an odd word here, gifteds, to denote the recipients of the artistic deed. It may bring to mind for some Thomas’ name for the Holy Spirit. Further, the three words may bring to mind my more recent naming of the Three in the divinity as Speaker, Spoke, Clasp. The Incarnate Word, the Spoke, is integral to the gifted aesthetization of the Cosmos.

⁸“Systematics: A Language of the Heart” is the title of chapter five of the Website book, *The Redress of Poise*.

little progress. Bachelard takes a Proustian Joycean stand: "Late in life, with indomitable courage, we continue to say that we are going to do what we have not yet done: we are going to build a house."

But what is this house? And do we have a plan? Might we so image the plan as to tune ourselves comprehensively, through "a construct of some sort"⁹ to nature's full finality? And should not that tuning be luminously biographic, if the tuning is to the totality, the flight of all bumble bees, always beyond our earshot?

I write of a genetically-imaged quest of the totality, yet I home in on bees rather than on beings. And there is method in the oddness. Do you not find it curious that somehow talking of metaphysics as offering an integral grip on being is somehow less demanding than thinking of it as an integral grip on the buzz of bees? Chapter twelve of *Insight* invites you to think of yourself - but not with refined linguistic feedback, and not with a tilt towards becoming - as a notion of being. Here I appear now to cut back the interest to you as a notion of music, and somehow the challenge seems to grow larger. Is this not partly because the five-letter construct "being" is not a construct of such a sort that it tunes our billion-bundled bent towards cosmic echochamberhood? The word "being," or the word, "metaphysics" is certainly not "a symbolic indication of the total range of possible experience."¹⁰ How can we densify the cosmic call to caul the fetus that would be an eschatological all in each?

So, it seems useful to cut back to that corner in which the bumble bee flies, to the long global history of images and instruments that edge us each and all towards being musical. How does one image being musical? I think now of Barenbaum, conducting from the piano, possessed by and of an image among images, knuckle-tuned, brain-scanned. Indeed, I am thinking of that conventional outside image, two meters long, of

⁹B.Lonergan, *The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, University of Toronto Press, 2002, 151.

¹⁰*Insight*, 396[421].

the 5½ minutes of the second movement of Mozart's 21st Piano Concerto. Master and student alike accept that conventional image: how else is one to share and to climb? Such imaging distresses no one who is serious about their reach for music. Why, then, should a parallel imaging distress those interested in the reach for being?

Yet it does and it will, at least till we escape the sophisticated resistance of axial general bias. In the late 1960s the problem of imaging layers of explanatory meaning emerged for me, especially as I struggled with the problem of re-orienting the field of zoology.¹¹ Later, in the beginning of the 1970s, there was the definite push towards what I now call "the first word of metaphysics", which I put down here immediately: how does it strike you?

$$f (p_i ; c_j ; b_k ; z_l ; u_m ; q_n)$$

Does it strike terror in your metaphysical desire? Yet it only repeats the three-letter construct "you" by "a construct of some sort" that tunes linguistic feedback to the you that reads, poised in history to feedback, to intussuscept, the you here now, now here, now-here and every-here. You are nature's orientation not just to nature's self-digestion but to its genetic re-symphonization. And *you* does not name you and your reach adequately.

Tossed stones and drum rhythms have been replaced in the last millennium by flights of crafts and crafty symphonies: but only through the support of unforeseen innovations of display. Can nature's orientation reach thus in particular zones of its quest, yet block off the reach for ever more adequate naming of itself on the platform of its present achievement, when it has "reached a viewpoint that current modes of

¹¹"Zoology and the Future of Philosophy" is chapter three of the Website book, *The Shaping of the Foundations*. It was written in the late 1960s. The device of adding superscripts and subscripts to distinguish, in animal studies, shifts at different scientific levels from commonsense meanings is introduced at footnotes 41 and 42. It is still a relevant suggestion

expression cannot convey”?¹² That is the question that I pose to you, for you, complex function that you are of nature’s climb, in this short essay, in that strange concoction of thirteen letters. Like the thirteen notes from C to shining C in Western music, my letters invite you, but more wholesomely, to seize your self thus as a notion of music open to the ocean of music that is and is to be.

I do not do so in eccentric loneliness: the logos of music, the minding of music that is musicology, thus invites you with its neurochemistry of tones and timbres. Thirty six years ago I struggled with that invitation of musicology in an effort to find a creative reordering of its growing and confusing complexity.¹³ What is music and where might it go? And might these questions have an integral heuristic open reach? History was and is reaching up, nature-bent, towards Lonergan’s intussusception of nature’s motherhood of music, to be blessed by functional and rhythmic cycles. But that is another essay and the story of another metaphysical word.¹⁴

This is the first of four contextualizing essays, before we get going towards to a slower collaborative reach for a communal control of the becoming of being. You may not have noticed that this essay, which stays close to the topic of you as a notion of music, has the same number as the chapter in *Insight* which is titled “The Notion of Being.” The numbering is not fortuitous. Indeed, you might look back now at *Joistings 11* to note that there is some connection between what we were doing there and the issue of self-affirmation that is at the heart of chapter 11 of *Insight*. This is not central to our struggle here, but it does offer the illustrative possibility of fruitful recycling, re-

¹²*Insight*, 546[569].

¹³The work, “Metamusic and Self-Meaning”, was done in Oxford in 1969, and presented, with a companion paper on botany, “Image and Emergence: Towards an Adequate Weltanschauung”, at the Florida Lonergan Conference of 1970. The two chapter form a relevant but difficult context for our searchings here. They are available as chapters 1 and 2 of the Website book, *The Shaping of the Foundations*.

¹⁴The “metaphysical word” which I later called the third word of metaphysics, is printed on page 124 of *A Brief History of Tongue*, Axial Publishers, Cape Breton, 2000.

reading. And this comes closer to the heart of that paragraph on page 3 above that concludes with Bachelard's ambition and mine: the reach to build a house, indeed an epilodge.¹⁵

So, let me raise in conclusion the question of whether I am writing of and for beginners. It is quite clear to me, at 74, that we all remain beginners, even though we may succeed in moving into an exponential growth pattern that seems quite astonishing and unacceptable in our present culture.¹⁶ In the theological context I raised this issue very existentially in an entire book devoted to the problem of taking a stand with the Peter of Matthew 16:16 before Jesus. How does one mean the claim that we share with Peter if one has "come about" sufficiently by salvaging the inner and outer words and their referents through a molecular luminosity of metaphysical equivalence?¹⁷ Then the real minor distinctions that ground the harmony of the Incarnate Word are heart-held, and we become luminously poised in the great graces of nature's climb.¹⁸ But one must return daily to these scales of being in the kataphatic patience of the Epilodge.

But are such words as the word, above, for you, the stuff of beginners in the ordinary sense? This question will recur, as we struggle along. The simple answer is,

¹⁵The book is available on the Website: *ChrIst in History*. The frontispiece contains three defining quotations, the third of which is quoted in the following note.

¹⁶The drive of methodology is towards the emergence of person's who have "come about" towards the strange authenticity described by Lonergan "So it comes about that the extroverted subject visualizing extension and experiencing duration gives place to the subject orientated to the objective of the unrestricted desire to know and affirming beings differentiated by certain conjugate potencies, forms, and acts grounding certain laws and frequencies"(*Insight* 514[537])

¹⁷Metaphysical equivalence is the topic of section 3 of chapter 16 of *Insight*. The person who has come about becomes operative capable of reading texts and things within the strange heuristic self-presence sketched by Lonergan in the quotation given in the previous note. Such persons are to be the collaborative members of functional specializations in the third stage of meaning.

¹⁸A context is the final chapter of my Website book, *The Redress of Poise*, "Grace: the Final Frontier".

No. Beginners' stuff will be always like the 52 weeks of exercises that make up *Introducing Critical Thinking*.¹⁹ The method then is always pedagogic, "it proceeds by cajoling or forcing attention and not by explaining the intended goal."²⁰ But as we move towards and out of the end of the axial period the community will begin to live in the *ethos* of the intended but unexplained goal: the parallel with contemporary chemistry becomes culturally evident.²¹ Furthermore, there are to be supportive complication. Sciences like chemistry and arts like music shall be shifting into luminosity within the possession of selves as scientists and artists. The primary data of nature's quest will occupy center stage.²² We will have left far behind the horrors of this axial cycle of decline where "the setting is magnificent; the lighting superb; the costumes gorgeous; but there is no play"²³ Then increasingly methodological growth will be sensed as exponential, shifting in each undergraduate year into a remoteness accepted in physics or music, and graduate studies will be sensed as the beginnings of a life-climb in logos, a global logos lifting the symphony of history forward towards deeper intimations of the future shared Logos.

The present ethos of philosophic discussion stands pretty firmly against any symbolization of legitimate remoteness of meaning. Do you not find that resistance in yourself? Do you not find yourself resonating sympathetically with such a distinguished Lonergan scholar as Fr. Frederick Crowe when he wrote me, in 1973, his

¹⁹ Authored by John Benton, Alessandra Drage and Philip McShane, Axial Publishing, Cape Breton, 2005.

²⁰ *Insight*, 398[423].

²¹ I skim past the massive set of problems that come under "the problem of general history, which is the real catch" (*Topics in Education*, 236). That problem is another twist on the challenge of the first section of chapter 17 of *Insight*.

²² This was a topic of *Joisting 10*, where it gave rise to a refinement of Lonergan's later definition (*A Third Collection*, 141, top) of generalized empirical method.

²³ *Insight*, 237[262].

honest reaction to my new “word” that I placed before you, boldfaced, above?

“But what is wrong on page 4?²⁴ It’s your blessed mathematical notation, which I studied for 83 seconds and then went on. But I’ve been working on my own insight as a consequence. The question: how to use symbolic notation for people to whom it is not easy as the alphabet? I think what we need is to see it forming, element by element, with accompanying explanation. But this means that you can never use it in a book where it is all there at one glance, but only viva voce, drawing it on a blackboard and talking at the same time. Oh I suppose you could put down one letter and explain, then put down two and explain the addition of the second, and use twenty pages of a book in the process - but in general, are there signs you use in a static state and other signs to be used only in a moving process?”²⁵

Have you a view and questions similar to Fred Crowe? Write to me, privately or publically, so that we can reach forward together. My broad answer pivots on the histories of the “conspicuously successful sciences,”²⁶ but also on the conspicuous success e.g. of music, dance, architecture, op-art. Terminological complexity blossoms with and grounds the ongoing processes of complexified theoretic understanding. It becomes part of the ethos of the cultured group, the graduate students in physics who are quite at home in the words of Lie algebras or affine transformations, and who can read a Feynman diagram like ordinary folk read a newspaper. There emerges a common language quite remote from commonsense talk, but further, there emerges that

²⁴Page 106 of the Website book *Wealth of Self and Wealth of Nations. Self-Axis of the Great Ascent*, where the essay that contains the symbolic identification of the human subject, “Being and Loneliness,” appears as an Epilogue. There also you can find an indication of the meaning of the parts, to which we return in *Joistings 14*.

²⁵I am quoting from a letter to me of May 13, 1972.

²⁶*Method in Theology*, 3.

component in the general culture that prevents the Fontanelle's²⁷ of the time - among whom of course are the scientists themselves - from imagining that "the essence" of what they have achieved can be summarily passed on to plain folk.²⁸ The latter component involve a complex of differentiations of consciousness that have yet to emerge. It is altogether too early in our struggle to attempt to go beyond mentioning them.

But have I made a start with you in my case for the need for a symbolization of methodology that would parallel in ways the complexifications that occurred in either music or mathematics? In *Joistings 14* we shall turn our attention to some elementary aspects of those complexifications, and it is no harm to recall as we end this essay, the useful paralleling with chapters of *Insight*. *Insight* chapter 14 is titled "The Method of Metaphysics". But what of *Joistings 13*, and in what way might it parallel that strange chapter of *Insight* titled "The Notion of Objectivity"? I suppose I could summarily point you to the question by typing, Can intentionality attain operative objectivity while abandoning metaphysics? (a question answered affirmatively by various Lonergan scholars). And there is the obvious related question, Did Lonergan abandon metaphysics?

²⁷On Fontanelle's Enlightenment drive for popularization see the final chapter of Butterfield's *The Origins of Modern Science*.

²⁸Popularization ranges from low-level newsprint to the glossy pages of *Scientific American*, but the common view is expressed by Stephen Hawking: "The basic ideas about the origin and fate of the universe can be stated without mathematics in a form that people without a scientific education can understand" (*A Brief History of Time*, Bantam press, 1988, 6).